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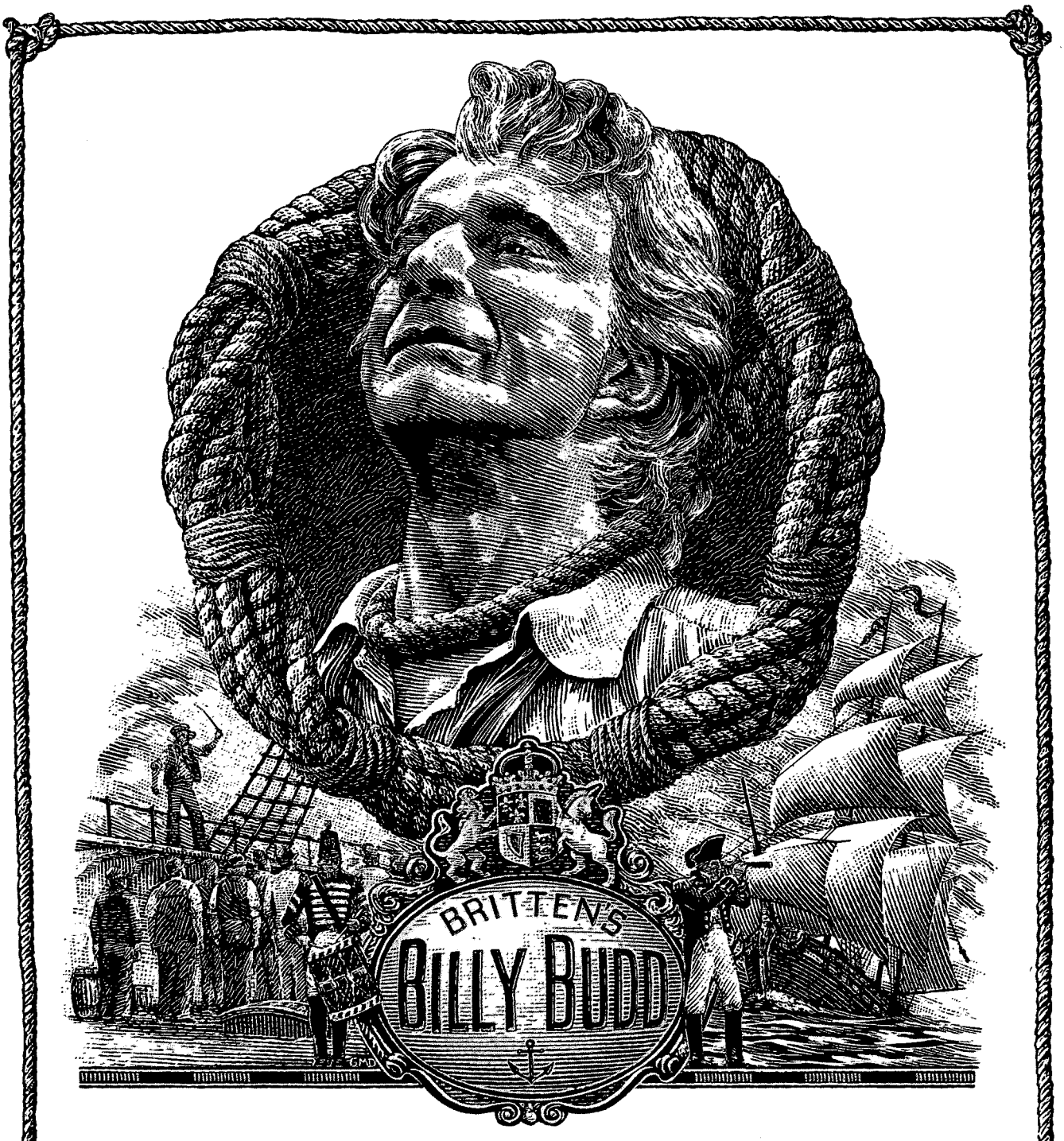


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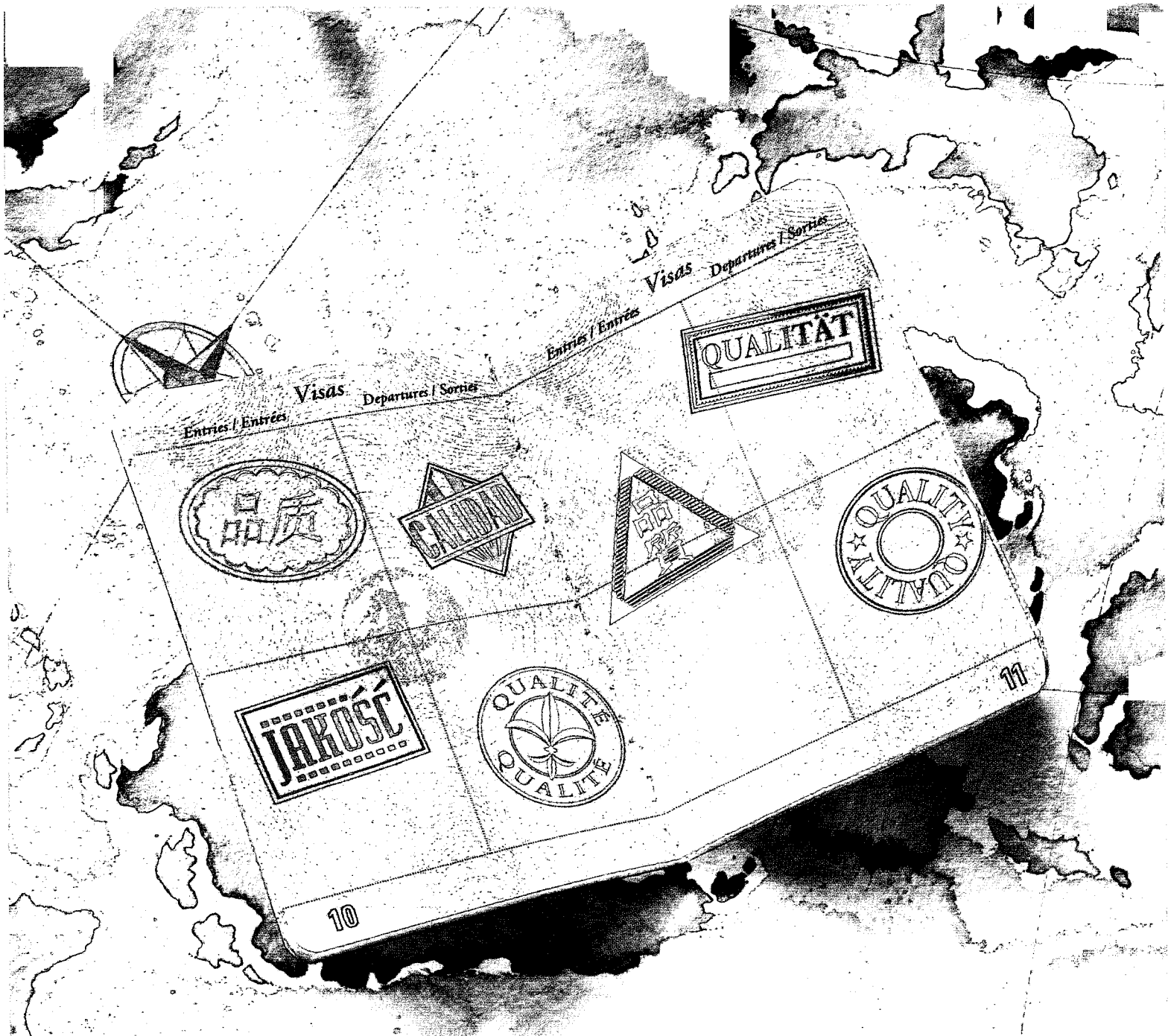


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THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

A National Magazine of Politics, Business, and Culture

May/June 1998 Vol. 9, No. 3

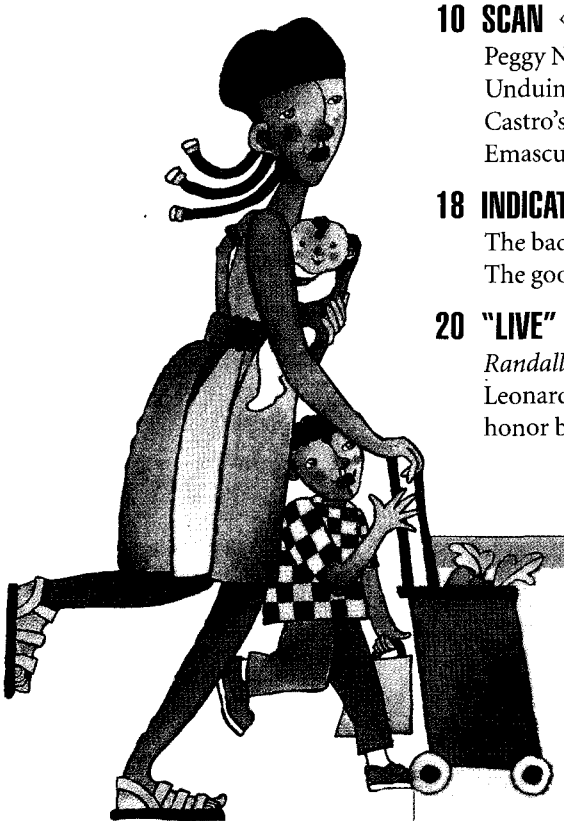
**4 BIRD'S EYE**
Children need parents, not experts.

**8 SIDELIGHTS**
Pet diet pills. Knuckle-dragging intellectuals. Kenneth Starr, College Democrat.

**10 SCAN ◇ Short News and Commentary**
Peggy Noonan on the Lite Presidency. The folks who brought you the Unabomber. Unduing the Nanny State. California teaches African Americans in Cantonese. Castro's subjects walk the streets. Unsung women. Gambling government. Emasculating the military. "Stop me before I conceive again."

**18 INDICATORS ◇ Numbers etc.**
The bad news: Our public school disaster is deepening.
The good news: Americans have started to notice.

**20 "LIVE" WITH TAE**
*Randall Wallace,* the man behind *Braveheart* and *The Man in the Iron Mask,* talks about Leonardo DiCaprio, Mel Gibson, and his crusade to bring bravery, moral strength, and honor back to the movies.



**26 THE PROBLEM WITH DAY CARE**
*Karl Zinsmeister*
There is no adequate substitute for a child's mother and father. Here's why.

**45 DISCOVERING MOTHERHOOD**
*Iris Krasnow*
A feminist journalist "surrenders" to motherhood and discovers she's not oppressed but happy and free. With a sidebar by *Charmaine Yoest* on America's preferences in child care.

**50 IS GOING HOME POSSIBLE?**
*Evan Gahr* reports on families who put their kids before their jobs and survived, even thrived. *Richard Miniter* profiles the boom in home businesses—and what's needed to encourage this family-friendly trend.

**53 HOW TO HELP PARENTS—AND HOW NOT TO**
*Maggie Gallagher* applauds tax policies that support at-home parenting. *Suzy Ryan* is angry with pols who sniff at moms like her. *Jennifer Roback Morse* describes how a free-market economist learned that the market can't provide mothering.

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**58 CRACKS IN ASIA'S BERLIN WALL**
*Bruce Bartlett • James Glassman • Leon Hadar • Lawrence Lindsey*
*William Safire • Fareed Zakaria*
Six distinguished observers debate how the "Asian Miracle" unravelled—and why some very good things could emerge from the mess.

**64 THE THIRD RAIL OF POLITICS SWITCHES SIDES**
*Michael Barone*
The planets are suddenly aligned for serious Social Security reform: Demographic and economic shifts are causing Americans to think of themselves as investors, rather than people who deserve entitlements.

**68 TRANSCRIPT ◇ Words Worth Repeating**
The distinguished British historian *Paul Johnson* surveys American history, and compares our post-war Presidents.

**70 IN REAL LIFE ◇ First-person America**
◇ Detective *Ray Wisher* nearly catches a .38 caliber hollowpoint bullet.
◇ Farmer *Blake Hurst* battles incompetent road warriors.

**72 ENTERPRISING**
A real-world test: Do chain bookstores reduce variety and choice?

**74 THE ECONOMIST**
A family dairy farmer reports that government "help" threatens to put him out of business.

**77 FLASHBACK**
Multicultural soccer is making headway among American youth. Patriots, arm thyselves with baseball bats.

**78 HOLLYWOOD REPORT**
Only Hollywood could make heroes out of lawyers.

**80 BOOK TALK**
◇ R. W. Bradford—*The Dark Side of Camelot* by Seymour Hersh
◇ Richard Kostelanetz—*Who Killed Classical Music?* by Norman Lebrecht
◇ John Hillen—*Making the Corps* by Thomas E. Ricks
◇ Martin Morse Wooster—*The Corner: A Year in the Life of an Inner-city Neighborhood* by David Simon and Edward Burns
◇ Michael Platt—*Shane* by Jack Schaefer

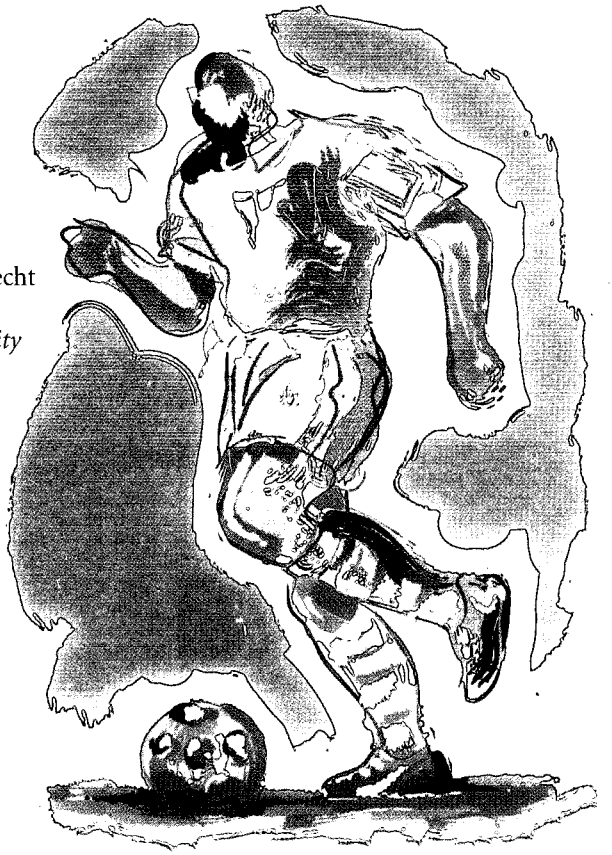
**85 THE DIGEST ◇ Summaries of Important Research**
What downsized government?...high-tech pork...two cheers for advertising...zoning rights and wrongs ...save the tigers.

**90 OPINION PULSE ◇ The Latest Survey Data**
What women want. Child care. Family rules. Rebellious teens?

**94 THE MAIL**
Country music at Yale. Carrot-and-stick welfare reform. A New Yorker learns to love Nashville. Gen X optimism.

**98 LAST GASP**


PAGE 77





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## Bird's Eye

KARL ZINSMEISTER

# Why Encouraging Daycare Is Unwise

There is an old saying that goes "Children have a special way of spelling love: T-I-M-E." What the very young hunger for more than for anything else in the world, modern researchers confirm, is closeness with their mothers and fathers.

Unfortunately, children are getting less of their parents' time today than in any previous era. A favorite cartoon of mine suggests how far we've strayed. It shows a corporate type speaking to his secretary from behind a large desk. "I've decided to spend more time with my family," he announces. "See if you can find them."

One professor I know illustrates the problem by way of an analogy. "Let's assume you had some other industry," he says. "The industry made shoes, and then you took a large chunk of the labor force out, something like 40 percent, and you changed nothing much else—you wanted to make the same amount of shoes of the same quality with the same technology. Everybody in the world would think you'd lost your mind. Well, that's basically what we did to parenting."

One reason the flight from parenting has been so fast over the last generation is because lots of self-appointed experts have advised the American public that there's no reason *not* to veer off into other pursuits while leaving the daily raising of children to surrogates. "The care of the young is infinitely better left to trained professionals rather than to harried amateurs with little time nor taste for the education of young minds," insists feminist Kate Millett.

Responsible authorities who ought to have challenged this kind of foolishness mostly failed to do so. One national statement on the family released a few years ago actually defined "parents" as "adult persons who care for children"—making their equivalence to babysitters and day care workers quite explicit. No sensible person actually believes this, of course, but it is becoming our official national orthodoxy anyway, because few people will speak against it for fear of being called the many names that now get slung at someone who defends the natural family.

Ours isn't the first era to experiment with substitute parenting on a large scale. There were, for instance, earlier periods when many European aristocrats relied on wet-nursing and nannying for the basic acculturation of their children. Historians tell us three factors encouraged this. One was a decline in the social status of mothers. Another was weakened regard for children. A third was rising narcissism.

Unfortunately, all three of those factors are present in our current era. Which is troubling, because the earlier experiments in surrogate childrearing did not end well. There is evidence that the eventual decline and decay of the European aristocracy, in fact, had much to do with the increased distance between parents and young children.

Over the last decade or two, many discoveries have been made that help explain why a child's early bonds with his caretakers are so important. Authorities used to believe that babies were essentially passive bundles, unable to perceive or seek out much from their environment. Any social responses were thought to be, as one scientific curriculum put it, "a figment of the over-involved mother's imagination, since baby's behavior is random, uncontrolled, essentially autistic."

Experts asserted that children needed only feeding, protection from danger, and other basic care until they were a year to a year-and-a-half old. And after that, it was said,



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the young mostly needed discipline and behavioral conditioning. Yale professor Arnold Gesell, the leading child developmentalist of the pre-World War II generation, believed that basic human capacities were biologically programmed into infants, and that they unfolded in stable, predictable ways without much relation to home conditions. Little credence was given to the idea that parents and small babies could have a relationship. Even "as late as the 1960s," Stanford University psychologist Anne Fernald remarks, "some people thought infants were cabbages."

That "expert" view has now been demolished. Against the old assumption that newborns are unable to perceive or seek out much from their environment, researchers have recently demonstrated that babies are sorting and responding to stimuli virtually from birth.

For instance, studies have shown that a one-week-old child will choose his mother's smell over any other. Five-day-olds will turn toward a pad soaked in their mothers's milk, while clean pads produce no response. The journal *Science* has reported that newborns will respond to poems their mothers read out loud before birth, but not to poems previously unheard. In another experiment, one-month-olds became upset when photos of their mothers were accompanied by recordings of someone else speaking. University of Washington psychologist Patricia Kuhl has discovered that six-month-olds can distinguish between their native language and foreign tongues.

Newborns just 10 minutes old much prefer pictures of faces to blank ovals or pictures with face-like features that have been scrambled. Tests show that ten-day-olds prefer their mother's face to others'. At 14 days, babies recognize and favor their father's face as well. Babies can also distinguish among various facial expressions. We know that infants in their first months will kick their legs more for a familiar mobile than for one they haven't seen before, or one that has been slightly altered. "Even at two-and-a-half months, an infant's memory is very developed, very specific and incredibly detailed," says Carolyn Rovee-Collier, a Rutgers University psychologist.

Longstanding claims that small babies were not capable of producing real smiles (early grins were insistently labelled "gas smiles" by generations of baby doctors) have been refuted by proof that infants in their third week will smile selectively in response to their mothers' voice. Even more strikingly, we know that infants just a few hours old will suck a nipple harder to activate a recording of their mother's voice than they will for a stranger's.

So it turns out infants are not cabbages at all. "Detailed studies of the amazing behavioral capacities of the normal neonate have shown that the infant sees, hears, and moves in rhythm to his mother's voice in the first minutes and hours of life," summarize pediatricians Marshall Klaus and John Kennell. "A lot more is happening in infants' minds than we've tended to give them credit for," agrees psychologist Karen Wynn.

All of this confirms the importance of a child's early experiences. It also supports the conclusions of "attachment" researchers like psychiatrist John Bowlby, who hold that babies have powerful internal mechanisms that drive them to connect themselves to their parents. "The bells that the children could hear were inside them," the poet Dylan Thomas once wrote. Apparently the bells that ring within newborns lead them to energetically pursue alliance with their mother, and to become anxious if these efforts are thwarted.

**HUNGER FOR THEIR MOTHER ISN'T SOMETHING BABIES CAN JUST "GET OVER." IT IS A NEED WIRED DEEPLY INTO THEIR CORE.**

Hunger for their mother isn't something babies can just "get over." It is a need wired deeply into their core. Writer Peggy O'Mara McMahon observes that the mothering behavior of different animal species

> falls into two categories: cache or carry. Species in the *cache* category are stashed in a den with other offspring while their mothers look for food, do not need to feed often, and do not need frequent physical contact with mother. The species in the *carry* category are marsupial-like. Their mothers' breast-milk is low in fat content and must be consumed almost continuously. They are not born in litters, and close physical contact with mother not only ensures frequent feeding, but also stimulates brain development.

From nutritional and other points of view, round-the-clock nursing and a carrying system of child care are not very efficient. So why do they exist in the higher animals? Because frequent suckling provides repeated opportunities for intimate interaction between mother and child—the very sort of contact that encourages higher mental processes in an infant. "Rapid onset of hunger and satiation in the baby," summarizes researcher Blurton Jones, is "a simple mechanism for ensuring that it stays with the mother."

We have unequivocal evidence that breast-fed children are physically stronger than non-breast-fed children, that they have greater verbal, quantitative, and memory abilities as preschoolers, and significantly higher I.Q. scores during their school years. This is due not simply to healthy substances in the milk, as many people assume, but also to the early mother-child relationship that breastfeeding affords.

This is not something we can easily wish away. Keep in mind that if all of human history were represented by one hour, the 200 years of our industrial era would represent only a fraction of the last second. The family arrangements that evolved during the course of human history grew up specifically because they matched human nature. Ignoring deep early childhood needs today won't make them go away; it will only produce unsettled offspring.

In an article in *The Journal of Pediatrics*, researchers Betsy Lozoff and Gary Brittenham report that the close "carrying" style of infant care traditionally practiced by mothers is a human universal that has prevailed in all cultures and places. Only very recently has this style of nurture been replaced in some social strata by an alternative more like the "nesting" practiced by birds. Under this alternative, babies spend much less time in physical contact with their mothers. They are more



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often confined to cribs or classrooms. Responses to crying and social bids are less immediate. And only a minority of all babies now get the benefits of extended breastfeeding. "These remarkable transformations," the doctors speculate, "may profoundly alter infant development."

It isn't only babies who need tight human connections. Parents do too, if they are going to flourish in their role of progenitor. A hint of this was contained in a statement made by PepsiCo President and CEO Brenda Barnes when she resigned her job, to much media comment, a few months ago. "I'm not leaving because my children need more of me," Barnes stated. "I'm leaving because I need more of them."

Many talented women who devote themselves to mothering while their children are young have come to this same conclusion. They do what they do not just out of devotion to their children, but because they have discovered there are deep personal satisfactions awaiting anyone who will pour herself into the role. (See our articles by Iris Krasnow and Evan Gahr.)

A dabbling, partial commitment of mother to child is even harder to sustain than full-blown engagement, notes John Bowlby:

> Enjoyment and close identification of feeling is only possible for either party if the relationship is continuous.... Just as the baby needs to feel that he belongs to his mother, the mother needs to feel that she belongs to her child, and it is only when she has the satisfaction of this feeling that it is easy for her to devote herself to him.

A public school teacher and former day care worker I corresponded with a few years ago made a similar point:

> Parents who use day care tend not to develop the kinds of parenting skills, or the self-confidence in dealing with their children, that seem to me to be necessary.... Since we were in charge during most of the children's waking hours, parents had very little opportunity to develop.... As a result they were generally nervous around their children, and impatient with the various unpleasant aspects of caring for them.

A family friend who used daytime babysitters heavily for several weeks when she had to pack for a sudden cross country move told me that the more time she spent away from her young boys, the less adroitness and patience she had for handling them. Likewise, Ohio mother Mary Robin Craig writes of a period when she worked full time and had a nanny that, "On my off days I could see that their lives had a flow that eluded me totally."

It's necessary to get into a swing with children, and simple overlap is a big part of this. There is evidence, as child developmentalist Urie Bronfenbrenner notes, that an infant uses physical, emotional, and probably invisible hormonal tools to "'teach' his parents" how to nurture him. But this can succeed only if the pupil shows up for class.

Obviously, there will always be families where death, divorce, or poverty make it impossible for parents to be their child's primary caretakers. These families deserve our help, and first crack at the limited number of truly wonderful surrogate caretakers who are able to pour themselves into the nurture of another person's child.

It is also obvious that substitute child care is generally not harmful in small amounts. As psychologist Diane Fisher carefully puts it, "day care can be a place that does not do a great deal of harm to children if they're there for a limited amount." The problem is that rather than just being a filler of gaps, day care is becoming a substitute for parenting in many families.

The question is not whether hired day care should exist (it always will), or whether it should be made as good as possible (of course it should). The question is whether everyday middle-class Americans should produce children without the intention of nurturing them. There is a difference between a compromise made in reaction to some crisis of fate, and an arrangement made simply because one wants to maximize one's own position while ignoring serious costs to others.

By transforming day care from a necessary stopgap for the unlucky few into a normal and accepted part of average lives, we are thoughtlessly taking a step of great consequence. One liberal professional who has devoted her entire working life to overseeing municipal day care programs warns that the shuffling of millions of middle-class children into day care is creating a new kind of underprivileged child in America. We are, she says, "duplicating the sort of developmental deprivation that used to be suffered only by the poorest and most disadvantaged."

Psychiatrist Stanley Greenspan worries that this may bring us to "an evolutionary crossroads":

> For the first time in history, there is a growing trend for more and more middle- and upper-middle-class parents to farm out the care of their babies to others, often in settings not conducive to meeting children's irreducible needs.... The impact will likely be slow and insidious. People may gradually become more self-centered and less concerned with others. Thinking may become more polarized.... Impulsive behavior, helplessness, and depression may increase.

The ultimate casualty, Greenspan suggests, may be "our capacity to live together and govern ourselves in cohesive communities."

When critics look back at the twentieth century, there's a good chance they'll identify the nightmare futurism of authors like George Orwell (*1984*), Aldous Huxley (*Brave New World*), and Yevgeny Zamyatin (*We*) as the most powerful and important writing of our era. These visionaries peered deep into the heart of modernity and detected some icy hazards lurking there.

Given that they were working in quite different settings, it's striking that Orwell, Huxley, and Zamyatin all placed the very same cultural disruption at the center of their anti-socialist masterpieces: A horrifying "professionalization" of childrearing in days to come. The great modern literature of dehumanization and crushed spirits has as its cornerstone the depiction of how societies become deranged when they let institutional methods of acculturating the young replace traditional family-based childhoods.



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In *Brave New World,* babies are brought up scientifically, under the care of white-uniformed nurses, in "state conditioning centres." As a consequence, "irrational" traits such as loyalty, altruism, humor, and love have nearly disappeared. The protagonist of Zamyatin's *We,* product of a child-rearing factory, grows up to crave a mother who will regard him as "a piece of herself." In *1984,* the natural family has been stripped of its childraising functions, and all offspring of the ruling class are reared by specialists. The result is shriveled human bonds and a sharp decline in intimacy. Only among the ragged, tradition-bound "proles" are children still tended by their parents, and this sentimental practice makes the proles hopelessly uncompetitive in a world built around work, production, and social control.

The thing that makes these cautionary tales so chilling is their plausibility. They depict modern life going awry in ways that are wholly conceivable to contemporary observers. If these authors were able to make us shiver at a world where mothering and fathering had disappeared altogether, that's because they only had to extrapolate from trends already under way.

As parental oversight of children weakens, what is to be done? For a start, we might admit that many of the excuses we give for proceeding along our current course are phony. In a little essay titled "The Tyranny of the Urgent," writer Charles Hummel notes that the pressing mundanities of daily existence will often push aside the truly important things in life if we don't resist. I see this regularly when it comes to day care, where the excuse is always that people put their kids into the hands of others because they "have" to work. But is that really true?

"It's easy to get addicted to the stimulation of the work environment and a certain standard of living," cautions author Stephen Covey. "As a result, parents are held hostage to these lies, violating their conscience but feeling that they really have no choice." Researcher Arlie Hochschild has found that, contrary to their rhetoric, certain parents are actually *choosing* overwork, as a refuge from the responsibilities of family life. Recent headlines like "Lies Parents Tell Themselves About Why They Work" (*U.S. News*), and "The Myth of Quality Time: How We're Cheating Our Kids" (*Newsweek*) suggest this is sinking in with the public.

So: One part of any solution to our child care predicament must be to encourage all parents to face facts, make tough choices, and change their private lives so they can be there for their children when they are needed.

Another part must be public efforts that acknowledge the high contributions and heavy burdens of conscientious parents, and offer assistance to mothers and fathers who make responsible choices. Given the slightest bit of support, many parents are ready to spring into wholesome action. Asked in a survey commissioned by the Independent Women's Forum to describe an "ideal balance between work and family" in their own lives, seven out of ten Americans said they would prefer either having one parent at home full-time, or having part-time work set around the family schedule. Only 15 percent chose "both my spouse and me working full-time with child care in or outside of our home" as their ideal.

In a March *Washington Post* survey, fully 68 percent of Americans agreed it would be better if mothers looked after their children at home. Asked which mothers of preschool children they respect more: those who work full time outside the home or those who stay home full time, the public chose at-home moms by 51 to 20 percent. All types of women—from full-time careerists to full-time mothers—said by margins of at least two-to-one that they respected at-home mothers more.

So the issue is how to encourage more families to translate their aspirations into reality. One thing policy makers could do to slow down the day care steam roller and increase parental caretaking would be to encourage more "flex-time" work, part-time jobs, and home work (all things that labor unions strongly resist). See Richard Miniter's article (page 51) on this subject.

Another much-needed reform would be to stop favoring parents who hire childminders (by letting them claim tax credits for their day care expenses) while offering no similar credit to parents who provide their own care. One way to do this would be to eliminate the child care tax credit entirely. Another way would be to extend the same financial support to at-home parents.

While we're at it, sharply raising existing tax exemptions and credits for young children would be a very good idea. Allowing families to keep more of their own money would improve child-rearing while also acknowledging in a fair way that parents molding our next generation are doing society's most important work.

"Income splitting"—a reform that would let a one-income family divide its earnings for tax purposes between husband and wife, bumping them down into lower tax brackets—is another long-overdue remedy. This would both fix our current tax code's marriage penalty, and also make it easier for families to survive with one parent primarily at home.

Other suggestions for what an intelligent child care policy should look like were offered recently by former *New Republic* editor Michael Kelly:

> It would seek to strongly discourage out-of-wedlock births. It would seek to strongly reinforce the idea that it primarily takes not a village but parents—two of them—to raise a child. It would offer help for parents who must work, but it would send an unmistakable message that, whenever possible, it is better that one parent stays home with the kids.
>
> The policy put forward by the Clinton administration...is irrationally biased toward the form of child care most parents like least—institutionalized group care—and against what most parents want most: to be able to afford to have one parent stay home.... Why does the administration seek an economic incentive for parents to choose work over childrearing? ...If the administration is serious about the best interests of the children, it will correct the anti-home-care bias in its policy.

Not every American child will enjoy the primary energy and devotion of his own parents when he is young—no matter what assistance is offered toward that end. But that ought to be our goal, the ideal toward which all of our encouragements are aimed. It's a simple, practical, and wholesome aspiration.

So what are we waiting for?



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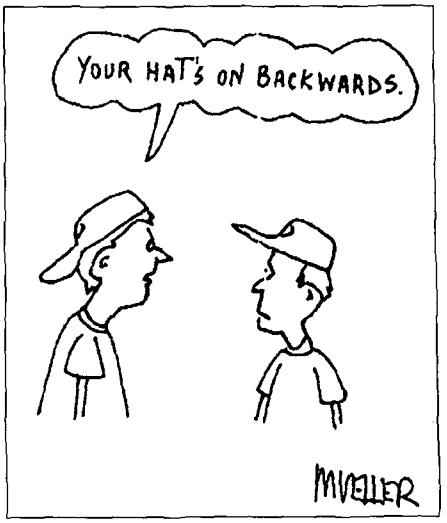
# Sidelights




**Carol Mehrling**, police chief of Montgomery County, Maryland, ran a red light, rear-ended a motorist, and totaled her own cruiser five days before the county announced a crackdown on red-light runners. ··· Former U.S. Transportation Secretary **Federico Peña** has admitted driving in a three-passenger-minimum lane with insufficient passengers. ❧ Predicting that "overpopulation of the world" may require "adjusting food sources," a Butler, Pennsylvania high school science teacher had his students eat chocolate-covered worms. ···"Pet diet pills are hitting the market after a recent study found obesity is the top health risk for pets," the *Wall Street Journal* reports. ❧ Traditionalism in odd places: Inmates at a South Dakota jail complained that their orange jumpsuits made them look like Dr. **Seuss** characters; they now wear old-style black-and-white uniforms. ❧ A boy was recently born to parents who had forgotten the existence of his embryo, frozen since 1989, until a letter arrived asking what they wanted to do with him. ··· Parents of two boys are suing the *au pair* agency that provided a male nanny who admitted molesting one boy almost daily and taking pornographic photographs of another boy under the care of a female *au pair.* ··· Analyzing college textbooks on marriage and family, professor **Norval Glenn** found them hostile to traditional family life and the decade associated with it: The 1950s, says one text, "brought only a flicker of contentment to a miniscule number of white, middle-class, suburban U.S. families." ··· **Garnet Cooper**, 33, was arrested in Ohio for prostituting her six- and 11-year-old daughters to buy drugs, beer, and cigarettes. ··· A ten-year-old boy was arrested after an armed stand-off with police in which he used his three-year-old niece as a shield; his attorney pleaded "not guilty due to a Prozac-induced trance."

❧ U.S. forces in the Gulf are under the command of "the cigar-smoking, weight-lifting Gen. **Zinni**, who looks like a fullback yet reads a book a week," thus embodying "the contemporary Marines' ideal of the officer as a knuckle-dragging intellectual," writes author **Thomas Ricks**. ❧ At least 21 governors are proposing "significant" tax cuts this year, according to the Center for the Study of the States.

Actual Japanese Embassy event: "Economic Morass in Japan: What goes down must eventually come up, right?" ❧ In a private dinner with historian **Paul Johnson**, House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** tried to convince him he was wrong to attack FDR in his new history of America. ··· Spending on corporate welfare rose in 1997, *Investor's Business Daily* says. ❧ Only 37 percent of the residents of glamorous Manhattan say they have sex at least once a week, compared to 50 percent of Queens residents, the *New York Daily News* reports. ❧ Union membership in America declined again in 1997 to 14.1 percent of workers. ❧ One company told business reporter **Amity Shlaes** that they recently bought $2.5 million worth of shares in H&R Block "when Clinton mentioned 21 different tax changes in the [1998] State of the Union." ❧ *The American Spectator* says a White House source described **Hillary Clinton** as "shaken" after learning her husband gave **Monica Lewinsky** *Leaves of Grass* by **Walt Whitman**: "He gave me the same book after our second date," the First Lady reportedly said. ··· **David Broder**, a pillar of the liberal Establishment, says the President's credibility on foreign and domestic matters "is crumbling." ··· **Kenneth Starr** was a College Democrat in the 1960s and supported **Hubert Humphrey** and **Lyndon Johnson**, reveals the *Washington Times*. ❧ A Maryland judge ordered the return of **Latrena Pixley**'s two-year-old son to her custody, even though Pixley had killed her baby girl. The *Wall Street Journal* points out that animal shelters follow stricter rules for the adoption of dogs and cats. ❧ "Thank you, St. **Thérèse**," cried gold medalist **Tara Lipinski** after a perfect program in which she skated with a locket of Thérèse of Lisieux around her neck. ❧ A news story headlined "Girl Scouts of '90s tout tomboy agenda" says that badges like "Housekeeper" are out, while ones like "My Self Esteem" (a badge with a large "No. 1") are in. ❧ Homosexual Buddhists demanded a meeting with the Dalai Lama to complain about his statement that although homosexuality "is not improper in itself," homosexual sex is. ❧ The Thai government is crusading against tobacco, although Public Health Minister **Montri Pongpanich** angrily refuses to give up smoking. ❧ About half the students entering Maryland public colleges must take remedial courses, and roughly a quarter require more than one such course. In fiscal '95, the state spent $17.6 million on this remediation. ··· One auto-parts maker says two-thirds of job applicants fail a test that requires them to add fractions, while a cardboard factory finds many would-be employees can't read a ruler. ··· A letter-writer to the *Washington Post* attacks school-choice efforts because "parents are poor choosers." ❧ Politics, writer **Christopher Hitchens** insists, is "show biz for ugly people." ❧ A North Carolina urologist has offered free oil changes to vasectomy patients. —*SW*



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# SCAN

## HOLD THE BONK-BONK

When the great conductor Sir Georg Solti died recently, his *Washington Post* obituary recalled his judgment on recent musical trends: "Although he conducted some contemporary music very well, Solti made no secret of his general preference for the romantic and classical repertory. 'For me as a conductor, modern music stops around 1950, with late Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Bartok,' he said in 1973.... He had no sympathy whatsoever for the avant-garde. 'I do not like much this tinkly-tinkly bonkly-bonkly music.'"

## INSPIRING THE UNABOMBER

With Theodore Kaczynski scheduled to be sentenced for his crimes on May 15, now is a good time to peer into the muck from which sprang the Unabomber.

In the early 1990s, a radical environmental newspaper called *Live Wild or Die!* published an "Eco-f***ers Hit List" that placed the president of the California Forestry Association at its top. On April 24, 1995, the new head of the Association, Gilbert Murray, received a lethal mail bomb from Theodore Kaczynski.

"I went to the doctor that day, with allergies; so I wasn't at my desk at lunchtime when the mail tub was delivered," Michelle Goldsberry, a receptionist and legislative assistant at the Association recently recalled for TAE. "Gil came up and, standing by my desk, opened the package." Murray, a 47-year-old father of two teenage sons, was killed instantly.

Just a month before this, Ted Kaczynski had attended a meeting at the University of Montana with top members of the radical environmental group Earth First!, an organization that has advocated vandalism of tractors at logging sites, tree-spiking, "monkeywrenching" of industrial equipment, and other acts of industrial sabotage. "This is *jihad,* pal. There are no innocent bystanders because in these desperate hours, bystanders are not innocent. More spiking is needed to convey the urgency of the situation!" asserted a 1995 article in the *Earth First! Journal.*

After several lumber mill workers were severely injured when their saws hit tree spikes, lumber companies became more cautious and installed metal detectors. *Live Wild or Die!* responded by informing its readers that ceramic spikes go undetected. "The blood of timber executives is my natural drink," and "the wail of dying forest supervisors is music to my ears," Earth First! founder Dave Foreman once proclaimed. Foreman also declared his hope that the famine in Ethiopia would wipe out "surplus humans."

Acting under such inspiration, Kaczynski killed three people, injured 23, and terrorized thousands in an 18-year campaign of paranoia and hostility.

Kaczynski's own manifesto insisted that the public must hear the "Earth's cry for rescue," and put an end to "the punishing weight of the industrial system.... Modern science cannot be extended any further. The only way out is to dispense with the industrial-technological system altogether." Only by returning to our "wild nature" can we save ourselves. "Factories should be destroyed, technical books burned."

Kaczynski's agenda was not so unusual. It merely fused the political correctness, intellectual pretension, and obsession with control that are quite common on the left with a bit of illogic, frenzy, and dynamite. That's why the *Los Angeles Times* was able to write that the Unabomber "has begun to be treated as a man of serious thoughts and letters." That's why the Gannett News Service could get away with declaring him "an intriguing hybrid of Robin Hood and the Green Hornet."

The ideological links between radical environmentalism and Kaczynski's savagery have been mostly ignored by the media (the same media that so eagerly parroted Bill Clinton's linking of the Oklahoma City bombing to conservative opponents of big government). But the Unabomber was no intellectual loner. Indeed, found among the junk in Kaczynski's dingy cabin was a page-worn and well-underlined copy of *Earth in the Balance,* Al Gore's morose environmental harangue.

Somehow, environmental groups like Earth First! carry on with their reputations intact (in liberal circles at least), despite having inspired Luddism, eco-terrorism, and murder. In the March/April 1998 issue of the *Earth First Journal* there is extended debate in favor of "more militant strategies" by environmentalists. "If someone broke into your home, tried to kill your family and steal everything you had, what would you do?," asks pseudonymous writer Snap Dragon. "The most sensible response is to fight like hell. Passive resistance, civil disobedience, and related strategies don't work.... However, this is exactly how we respond to the homicidal maniac of industrial society."

"We need to consider more militant strategies," declares Snap Dragon. "The most common objection to more radical tactics...is that they are equated with violence and thus inherently oppressive and immoral.... This analysis is based on the extremely unbalanced morals of modern human civilization.... In the natural world, when animals are attacked, they



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run or fight back.... We are part of the Earth defending ourselves. We are animals with nowhere to run."

Snap Dragon's bottom line? "There simply is no moral or strategic imperative to adhere to nonviolence.... We don't need to convert the public.... We don't have the luxury of civility. We must do whatever is necessary to defend our home and protect our ecological family.... It's time to jettison the nonviolent code." Sounds perilously like the Unabomber all over again.

If Snap Dragon and his environmentalist friends are looking for a home office for their crusade, there's an ill-omened cabin on the market: one room, no heat, no electricity, no windows, no water, needs work.

*—**Ralph Reiland** teaches economics at Robert Morris College in Pittsburgh, PA.*

## UNDUING THE NANNY STATE

I suspect a future restoration of freedom will come less through public policy than through private acts. Laws won't be repealed; we'll just learn more and more ways to ignore them. Here is a case to add to the files:

If you shop for a new car, as I recently did, you will find that some idiot bureaucrat has required that a large, ugly sticker be pasted to both visors, on the side normally facing out, warning us against the dangers of the airbags that another idiot bureaucrat made us buy. Driving around with these things staring me in the face has been infuriating. My car dealer said removing the stickers would ruin the visors, and he wasn't sure it would be legal to sell me unstickered ones, even if I were willing to pay the ridiculous cost of new visors.

Well, just recently the *New York Times* had an article about the difficulties new companies face even if they have a wonderful product. The case in point was a product called "Undu," said to remove any sticker along with all its adhesive from any material without damage. Monday, I bought some. It worked. Stickers gone, visors in perfect condition. Fantastic stuff. And I owe it all to the *New York Times*.

*—**Charles Murray** is Bradley Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.*

## WHY CAN'T MY SON'S TEACHER SPEAK ENGLISH?

George Louie worried that the biggest barrier to his son's education would be found amid the crime, drugs, and desperation of his inner-city Oakland, California neighborhood. Then he visited his son's kindergarten classroom.

Shortly after his son Travell started at Lincoln Elementary School last September, Mr. Louie arrived early to pick him up. When he walked into class, he was astonished. The teacher and 22 students sat in a circle—speaking Cantonese, a Chinese dialect. His son, an African American, sat in the back with three other students while the teacher ignored them because they didn't speak Chinese. "They're robbing him of an education," complains Louie, a widower and amputee who lives on a Social Security disability pension, welfare, and food stamps. "I listened for 45 minutes and not one word of English was spoken. Not even *hello*."

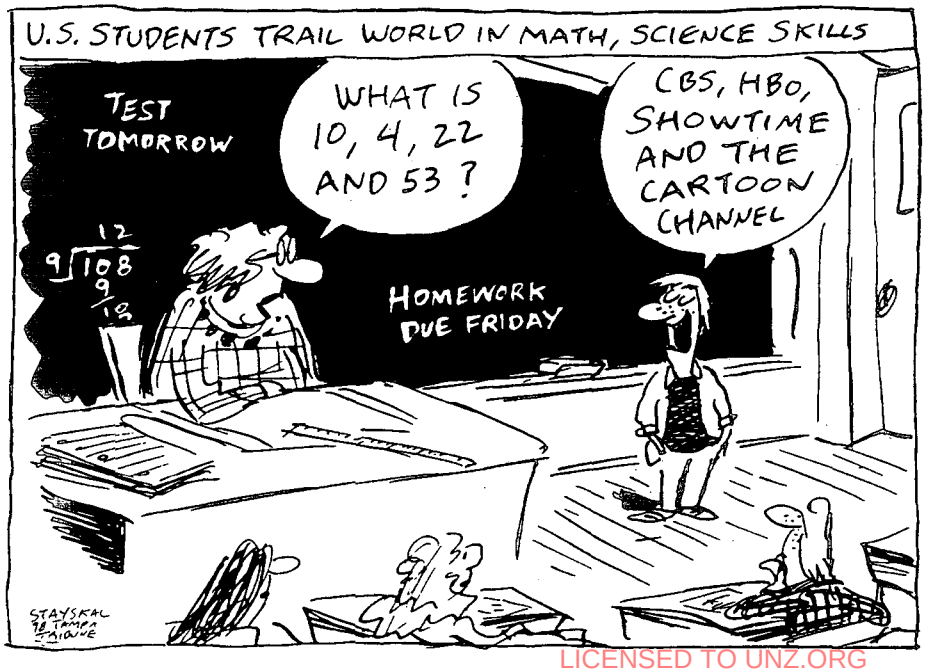
Louie went to see Wendy Lee, the school principal. Lee offered to transfer Travell to another bilingual class in which more English is spoken. Travell would be one of three or four native English speakers in that class. But his son would still "be getting a third or a half of an education," says Louie.

Couldn't my son be taught in all subjects in English, like most American students? Louie asked. We don't offer full-time English-language instruction in kindergarten, principal Lee answered. How will my son learn if he can't understand? Louie asked. Lee replied coolly: The school district could bus him across town to a school that teaches in English.

Why wasn't I told that my son would be in a Chinese class? Louie asked. State law requires parents be sent a letter notifying them before their children are put into bilingual classes. Lee admits she did not send a notice on time: "It was my oversight." She sent the letter after Louie complained.

How could the Lincoln School put an African American in a class composed of children who don't speak English? Lee says simply because all of her kindergarten classes are bilingual. Louie suspects another motive: money. California gives public schools more cash for students in bilingual programs. "Travell is being used to fill out the class and get more money for the school. But he's the one paying the price," Louie says. The state and federal governments do provide more funding for students in bilingual classes, Lee admits. She wouldn't say how much more money her school received.

This is not an isolated case, critics charge. "Many children have been dumped into bilingual programs to make more money for the school," says Jorge Amselle, a bilingual expert at the Center for Equal Opportunity. The Pa-



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cific Foundation has identified more than 20 such cases in the Oakland area alone.

This June California voters will be able to vote on the merits of bilingual education for the first time in the almost-30-year history of the program. Known as Proposition 227 or "English for the Children," the ballot issue will require access to English-speaking teachers for *all* students. "I hope it passes before Travell has to go to the first grade," Louie says.

*—Richard Miniter writes for* Reader's Digest *and other national publications.*

## CASTRO FINDS ANOTHER WAY TO EXPLOIT THE CUBAN PEOPLE

Visiting Cuba recently, I spent a lot of time with prostitutes. That is to say, I spent a lot of time observing the phenomenon of a once-puritanical socialist state using prostitution to prop up an economy devastated by 40 years of central planning.

Havana still isn't exactly Bangkok, but prostitution is rampant even by Third World standards. An unattached male tourist can hardly move a block on the Malecón (the city's sea-walk) without receiving propositions from young ladies attired in Spandex and other professional garb. At night, lovely señoritas invaded the bar at my hotel.

The streetwalkers were brisk and businesslike. Their colleagues at the hotel were more sophisticated. After being complimented on my manly good looks and profound sense of humor, I was told that Cuban women are both passionate and intensely curious about foreigners. My newfound friends observed that as our relationship deepened I, of course, would want to help them financially.

In Cuba, the flesh trade is intimately (forgive the pun) related to the country's tourist economy. When the Soviet subsidy to Cuba—about $5 billion annually—ended in 1990, Castro was forced to resurrect tourism, a mainstay of Cuba in the '40s and '50s. Last year, 1.2 million tourists came from Canada and Western Europe, and the regime is opening hotels, mostly joint ventures with the Spanish Melia chain, at a furious pace, hoping to roughly double the number of rooms by the year 2000.

After 40 years of Castroism, Cuba is pathetically poor. The average worker earns 214 pesos (the equivalent of less than $10) a month. Basic commodities are rationed. Residents of Havana are entitled to seven eggs and two pounds of fish a month, which aren't always available. Necessities such as shoes, soap, and cooking oil are available only in dollar stores. Hence the desperate pursuit of the Yankee monetary unit.

Cubans employed in tourism work primarily for tips, often earning more from gratuities in a day than the state pays them in a month. You'll find engineers working as doormen and doctors driving cabs. But such coveted jobs are limited, even with the tourist trade growing at a dizzying pace.

With a few modest exceptions, Cubans are forbidden to start businesses. El Presidente is terrified of the development of a middle class. "When a man has 60,000 pesos under the mattress of his bed," Castro explains, "and he has made the money making brooms, he has no interest in being a Communist." Just so.

Thus when the Cubans who rent rooms in their homes to foreigners or operate modest restaurants begin to accumulate "excess income," the regime cracks down with punitive taxes and crushing regulations. The desperation engendered by this double squeeze—the need for dollars and the lack of opportunity to earn them through a market economy—drives women to the streets.

Castro has exploited the Cuban people in every other way imaginable—stealing their labor, deploying the men in foreign wars. That he now profits from the sale of Cuba's women to keep his vile regime afloat is of a piece with four decades of abuse.

*—Don Feder writes for the* Boston Herald.

## NOT-SO-SUBTLE MEDIA BIAS

An interesting study by the Media Research Center found that the national press is blatantly unbalanced in its application of political labels.

## READ THIS RECENTLY?

**A remarkable but underappreciated fact: The price of oil is now lower than it was 100 years ago. Remember that the next time someone tries to alarm you with rhetoric about resources being exhausted.**

The investigators began with a data base containing every news story carried by the *New York Times, Washington Post,* and *USA Today* in 1995 and 1996. Within it, they compared how four prominent conservative groups (the Family Research Council, Eagle Forum, the National Right to Life Committee, and Concerned Women for America) and four prominent liberal groups (the National Organization for Women, the Feminist Majority Foundation, Planned Parenthood, and the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League) were identified in the news stories.

The findings: In 47 percent of the cases where they were mentioned, the first four organizations were labeled conservative or right wing. But in only 3 percent of the cases where the second four organizations were mentioned were they labelled as liberal or left wing.

So much for a neutral press.

## THE LITE PRESIDENCY

The ultimate "Teflon President" to whom nothing scandalous seems to stick, says former presidential speechwriter Peggy Noonan, isn't Reagan—it's Bill Clinton. Noonan, who helped draft Reagan's eloquent remarks on the fortieth anniversary of D-Day and gave Bush his thousand points of light, recently told *TAE* that the most notable lines from the Clinton era may be "I didn't inhale" and the moment in 1994 when he answered a question on MTV posed by a shapely young blonde. Q: Mr. President, the world's dying to know—is it boxers or briefs? Clinton: Usually briefs (laughter).

"He was enjoying the moment, and no doubt thought he was being flirted with," Noonan says. "What was worse was that he spoke about it afterwards at one of those big Washington dinners where he had to make a funny speech." She remembers the occasion as a classic Clinton moment, a signature of the man she says has



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"made the presidency lighter than air and full of froth. He talked on and on about his underpants. I sat there thinking, That man knows right now, as he stands behind the lectern, that 2,000 people are looking at him and imagining him in his underpants. And at first I thought, How embarrassing. But then I realized, No, that's what he wants. What he is at heart is an exhibitionist."

Some have counseled Clinton to use a major presidential address to tell his side of the story on today's sexual scandals, but Noonan disagrees. "I don't think any American President should ever make a speech about issues intimate and embarrassing," she says. "The great presidential speeches shouldn't be joined by a seamy and disingenuous tale of 'What I Did with the Girl in the Office.'"

Although the Oval Office has witnessed some of the most important announcements in American history, in almost six years as chief executive Clinton has delivered only a handful of national TV addresses there because, Noonan believes, "He considers serious speeches to be something that box him in. He could give a very big, serious speech about where we are in terms of race in America, but he doesn't want to." And so instead Clinton proposes an Oprah Winfrey-style forum broadcast on the ESPN sports network because his advisers want to target the white male audience with whom his "message" on race has yet to resonate.

"He has nothing serious to say about race," Noonan argues. "He brings impulses and sentiments, not hard thought, which he thinks can only get you into trouble." What's more, an Oval Office address runs counter to the "MTV-Arsenio Hall-I've owned an El Camino pick-up with Astroturf in the back, and you don't want to know why (ha-ha)" image he has cultivated. In short, "It demands a seriousness that I believe Mr. Clinton doesn't see in himself, and he understands others do not see in him."

*—John Meroney is a regular contributor to* TAE.

## BRAVE NEW VERMONT

Hillary Clinton's "village" has nothing on the Vermont legislature, which is going ahead with plans for compulsory preschool. Vermont's Education Department and Human Services Agency have been ordered to report next year on the costs and benefits of requiring three-year-olds to attend half-day care, and four-year-olds to attend full-day care during the school year.

Among other things, this would add 16,000 students to the 103,000 attending Vermont's public schools, thus requiring significant increases in local school budgets. But then that is exactly why the teachers' unions love it.

State Representative Bill Suchmann (R-Chester), the main proponent of the bill, offers this rationale: "Children who attend an enlightened preschool program...will have an incalculable head start over those left with a bored baby sitter watching TV. The neglected have-nots of our society, as they enter kindergarten, will never in their life have equal educational opportunity once the doors of their mind have been shut to learning."

A front-page story on Suchmann's plan in the *Burlington Free Press* provoked immediate public outrage. A call-in poll found people overwhelmingly opposed. One caller said, "I don't think that the best preschool in the world can compare to a parent who truly cares about their child's learning and education." Another commented, "Parents should be taking care of their own children and not leaving it to other people."

Rep. Suchmann replied that preschool must be mandatory and state-run because "many children do not have parents available at home or even capable of appropriate intellectual stimulation." He added, "We spend countless millions on police protection, corrections, drug rehabilitation, and welfare, most of it the result of failed or inadequate education."

If the indignant and angry letters to the *Free Press* are any indication, the plan for mandatory preschool will not survive. Mark Payton of South Burlington described the bill as "a slap in the face to all parents who are concerned about their children's early development and education." It tells them "that Big Brother loves their children more than they do."

That Orwellian metaphor is well-suited to a plan reminiscent of the totalitarian motto: Everything which is not prohibited is compulsory.

*—Noah Pollak is a junior at the University of Vermont.*

President Reagan greets speechwriter Peggy Noonan, whose latest book is *Simply Speaking.*

## UNSUNG PUBLIC WOMEN

The Centerview Extension Club was organized near our Missouri farm in March 1932. Its mottoes were "Builders of Better Home and Community Life" and "Home—the Heart of America." The group cooked meals at farm auctions and donated the proceeds to local families in need. Each summer it organized a tour of a local point of interest for club members and their families. This was important to me, because my grand-



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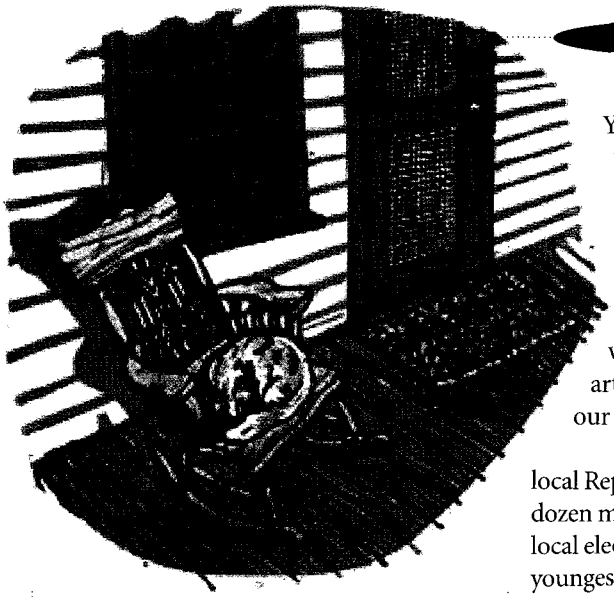


mother was a charter member and the tour usually meant I had a day off from cutting weeds with a hoe.

Affiliated with the University of Missouri Extension Service, the club educated its members in the art of homemaking, when homemaking was still considered an art. The group was serious about self-improvement and conversation, and both activities served an important role in the lives of the people who lived in our small, rural community. But now information is disseminated by TV, and the sort of farmwives who looked forward to the monthly meetings now run cash registers at Wal-Mart. Unable to attract members from any generation other than my grandmother's, the club finally died along with most of its remaining members in the early 1990s.

A similar story involves Marnie Shaum, who started her career working for Time-Life in New York City while her husband Jim was stationed there during World War II. After the war, Marnie returned to Missouri as a homemaker. "Homemaker" is a term rarely used today, and upon reflection, it doesn't do justice to Marnie's life. Every organization in our small town has benefited from her involvement. The Presbyterian Church, the Mule Barn Theater Guild, the Republican Women, the American Association of University Women, the Business and Professional Women, and the Atchison County Historical Society have all been graced by Marnie and the women of her generation who made our community work.

Tarkio Community Betterment recently named Marnie the Citizen of the Year. The award, not her first, was well deserved, but it pointed to a problem that we, and most communities, have: Marnie is well into her seventies, and no one in my baby boom generation will fill her shoes. We're all too busy with work to be interested in the arts, or history, or anything outside our homes and jobs.

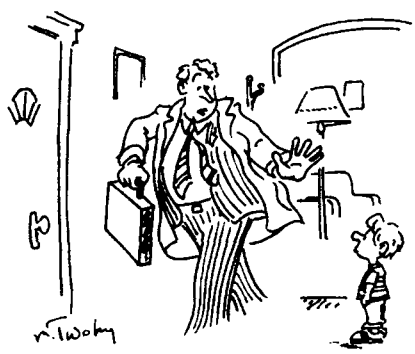
Once a year I give a talk to the local Republican women's club. About a dozen members are left, and excepting local elected officials, Marnie is the youngest. The discussion is always lively, and the members are well informed. My wife Julie usually accompanies me to these meetings, and she is always cornered by one of the ladies who, rather plaintively, asks if she knows of any younger women who would like to be members. Julie is a member, but rarely attends the Friday noon meetings. She supervises eight employees in our business and can't take the time away from work to attend.

Another woman who enriched our community was Mary Craig. She spent years in each and every cemetery in Atchison County, cataloguing the gravestones, identifying and tracing the lineage of each of the occupants. The results were printed in a huge volume shortly before her death. A work somewhat short of Gibbon, perhaps, but a definite link to our past here in Atchison County. We often use her book as a guide when we reminisce about family members and neighbors, their origins and their ends. It truly is a work of love and respect for her ancestors. Mary never had a career, but she certainly had a vocation, and I'm glad she did.

Mary, Grandma, and Marnie didn't have careers outside the home; they raised families and helped in the family businesses. But their contributions didn't end there. They ran their respective churches, and local politics, and most every civic group. They served as links to the past, and to neighbors, and to the world outside work. All of them belonged to book clubs of one kind or another, and when they met in each other's homes to review and discuss, they were far better read and better informed than their husbands.

People today think such women lived lives of quiet desperation, surrounded by screaming kids and isolated from the world. But in fact they enjoyed public and fulfilling lives. The contributions they made were never measured in GDP, but they were real, and society was much richer because of their efforts.

*—Blake Hurst is a regular contributor to* The American Enterprise.



**"Later, Josh—these are Daddy's peak earning years."**

## CONVERTING GOVERNMENT PENSIONS TO REAL PENSIONS

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) has recently called for cutting Social Security taxes and permitting workers to invest the money they save in individual retirement accounts [see p. 64]. If the feds have the sense to follow this path, they'll once again be following the lead of more daring state efforts.

Michigan has been the leader of such reform. Under its new system, the state contributes 4 percent of the worker's salary into an individual retirement account and will match another 3 percent. The worker also may contribute an additional 13 percent that will not be matched by the government.

According to state legislator Donald Gilmer, the reform has two virtues. First, "the old system simply wasn't sound from an actuarial standpoint." Plus, under the old system—in which state employees needed ten years on the job to become fully vested—"over 60 percent of workers never drew a dime of benefits. And that seemed to me to be fundamentally unfair." Under the new system, an employee is fully vested after four years and can take the money he and his employer have contributed with him should he leave his job.

Such a change, Gilmer argues, is family friendly. "The old system discrimi-



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nated against women because they are the ones who get pregnant and often have to leave their jobs. We were punishing people for choosing full-time parenting."

Opposition to the change came from a predictable source: labor unions. The teachers' unions were ultimately successful in excluding their members from the reform—a perverse outcome, given that two-thirds of such employees never received benefits under the old system. But their arguments didn't resonate with the public. Kim Rhead, principal sponsor of the bill, explains that reform opponents argued "that people are too stupid to take care of their own pensions. That just isn't true. Many people who aren't rocket scientists have defined-contribution plans and are flourishing under them. They have no problem knowing what to do."

Lawmakers in Washington should pay close attention to the strides Michigan has made, because, as Rhead says, "if we look at it realistically, making Social Security a defined-contribution system is our only hope."

*—Aaron Steelman is a staff writer at the Cato Institute.*

## GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED GAMBLING CORRUPTS AMERICANS

The national commission studying the impact of gambling recently reviewed a study by the International Union of Gospel Missions showing that 18 percent of homeless men and women cite gambling as a cause of their homelessness. Fully 70 percent of homeless people described gambling as an obstacle to their recovery and return to productive society.

Governments do far more than just tolerate gambling today—they have become its main sponsors. Harvard professor of government Michael Sandel notes that with most state governments now hooked on lottery money, "they have no choice but to continue to bombard their citizens, especially the most vulnerable ones, with a message at odds with the ethic of work, sacrifice, and moral responsibility.... This civic corruption is the gravest harm that lotteries bring.... To keep the money flowing, state governments across America must now use their authority and influence not to cultivate civic virtue but to peddle false hope. They must persuade their citizens that with a little luck they can escape the world of work to which only misfortune consigns them."

## AND YOU THOUGHT *OUR* POLITICIANS WERE CRAZY

The Japanese government has never been shy about trying to manipulate markets. But some people, apparently, never learn.

Various bureaucratic interventions, public subsidies, and government finaglings finally suffocated Japan's economy at the beginning of this decade. Now, amidst their seventh consecutive year of stagnation with no signs of serious economic liberalization in sight, senior officials of Japan's ruling party have apparently been using billions of dollars worth of public money to buy stocks—in an attempt to push the Nikkei stock index up high enough by the end of the fiscal year to erase the previous 12 months' market losses.

A novel way for government to "encourage economic growth"—or at least hide economic collapse.

## THE GREAT ALTERNATIVE PRESS

Free weekly newspapers in cities across the nation pride themselves on their rugged "underground" skepticism. But this spring, as they've done for 23 years, these papers will print a special interest group's press release without editing it.

The lucky group is the Sonoma, California-based Project Censored, which issues an annual list of the "top ten censored stories" of the previous year. And although some of group's "censored" stories are intriguing, the list is largely disingenuous.

To start with, Project Censored's name isn't accurate. "Censorship" refers to government action that blocks the press from reporting stories. Yet in an interview with the *Rocky Mountain News,* the project's director, Peter Phillips, complained only about "ideological censorship, marketplace censorship, and P.R. censorship." Doublespeak.

Take Project Censored's prominently featured "censored" story of 1997: the Clinton administration's aggressive efforts to increase American arms sales to foreign nations. According to Project Censored's press release, the story showed up only in the leftist magazine *In These Times.* Too bad the "125 faculty, student researchers, interns, and community experts" the organization's press release brags about consulting didn't look at the *New York Times* on August 16, 1997. That little-known newspaper featured a front-page story in its national and Internet editions reporting on the topic. The *Dallas Morning News,* one of the nation's ten largest dailies, ran its own feature on October 19 (as a section lead), and several smaller publications also chimed in. Maybe the story deserves more ink, but it's hard to make a case tying the story to anything that happened during 1997: the government has pushed arms sales to America's allies since the end of World War II.

Indeed, six of the ten stories on Project Censored's 1997 list don't qualify as "hard news": no breaking event during 1997 made them compelling. Project Censored's number-two story, for example, deals with ingredients in cosmetics called nitrosamines, which some scientists believe may be carcinogenic. The story is interesting, but the Food and Drug Administration issued a recommendation to discontinue nitrosamines' use in 1979. Maybe the FDA should have authority to ban potential carcinogens from cosmetics, but it's difficult to say that anything (besides two articles from *In These Times*) gave the story particular relevance during 1997.

Sometimes Project Censored picks stories that the mainstream media is already working on. One 1997 story deals with an Amnesty International report on torture device exports. *Time* ran a story on the report in its April 6, 1998 issue. Douglas Waller, the story's author, started work in late 1997.

In the end, four of the group's ten stories have a definite hard news angle: A federal law which Project Censored claims lays the groundwork for a sys-



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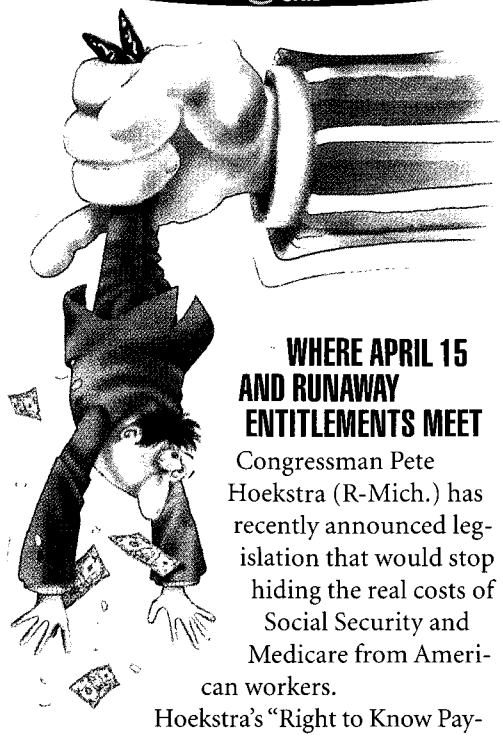
tem of national ID cards; the landing of a Russian spacecraft's plutonium core over South America; cuts in Mattel Corporation's work force coupled with an increase in the corporation's overseas production; and the U.S. Army's plans to dispose of nerve gas by burning it in special facilities in Oregon.

The ID story, which received scant mention in the mainstream press, involves a provision in the September 1996 immigration reform act which authorizes $5 million for three states to create pilot programs linking drivers' licenses with the Social Security database. The fact is, though, no state has taken the feds up on their offer. *[Editor's note to ace Project Censored researchers:* TAE *ran a story on the subject on page 80 of our September/October 1995 issue.]*

The remaining "hard news" stories are simply ideological whipping boys. The Russian spacecraft's problems become a way of reiterating the scare—which nearly all space scientists dismissed as preposterous—over the nuclear reactor on board the Saturn-bound Cassini spacecraft. In any case, the story ran on the wire services and, by Project Censored's own account, in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post.*

Similarly, the story on job cuts at Mattel serves to attack free trade. The nerve gas disposal story is simply a matter of taking sides (with environmentalists, against many scientists) in a scientific debate. Sounds almost like "ideological censorship, marketplace censorship, and P.R. censorship" to us.

*—**Eli Lehrer** writes often for* The American Enterprise



## WHERE APRIL 15 AND RUNAWAY ENTITLEMENTS MEET

Congressman Pete Hoekstra (R-Mich.) has recently announced legislation that would stop hiding the real costs of Social Security and Medicare from American workers.

Hoekstra's "Right to Know Payroll Acts" would instruct employers to begin issuing paycheck stubs and W-2 forms that show each worker exactly how much has been deducted from his compensation for all Social Security taxes, including the currently hidden employer share. (Presently, the total is over 15 cents out of every dollar earned.)

It will be interesting to see how popular Social Security remains once average workers realize they're having more taken out of their earnings for that single program than for all other federal purposes.

## AMERICA'S TAX INFORMERS

A few tax officials in Germany have suggested a new policy: offering cash rewards to people who accuse others of violating the tax code. According to a recent report in the *Washington Post*, just the mention of this possibility has civil libertarians in that country up in arms. They warn that disgruntled employees, jilted lovers, and irritable next-door neighbors would use the system to harass their foes. It would bring back, said one opponent, the "denunciation culture" reminiscent of "the unspeakable practices of the Nazis and Communists."

Germany is not alone in rejecting the idea of paying people to spy on their friends and neighbors. The American Bar Association surveyed the legal codes of 16 other democratic nations and found that none of them had provisions allowing tax authorities to offer cash rewards to informers.

In the United States, we do things differently. Quietly buried in section 7623 of our tax code is a provision that allows the IRS to offer cash rewards to tax informers. Washington is not exactly proud of the program. The IRS never gives statistics about paid informers in its annual reports, and it has turned aside all my requests—under the Freedom of Information Act—for data on the practice.

From other sources I have learned that the number of informers being recruited by the IRS is large—and growing. In 1961, there were 4,401 informers filing for cash rewards; in 1989, the most recent year for which I have data, the number had nearly tripled, to 11,754. The available data also indicate that the informer system is not a particularly efficient enforcement device. Over 90 percent of the accusations prove to be bogus. But the IRS has to investigate, and thus burden, each accused taxpayer—which, in many cases, is exactly what the accuser intended.

True, a program of paid informers will slightly strengthen any tax system. This follows from the general principle that the more closely you copy police-state methods, the more effective the tax system. But a government that cares about privacy and civil rights would put a limit on the application of this doctrine. In criticizing the idea of paid tax informers for Germany, Bavaria's finance minister Erwin Huber said, "The ends do not always justify the means."

It's too bad tax officials in the United States don't agree with him.

*—**James L. Payne** is author of* Costly Returns: The Burdens of the U. S. Tax System.

## AUDITING THE IRS

- Number of times paperwork received each year by the IRS would encircle the Earth: 36
- Percentage of the IRS's own budget for which it could not account in 1993, according to a General Accounting Office audit: 64
- Number of trees that must be cut down each year to supply the 8 billion pages of paper needed for filing the country's income taxes: 293,760
- Number of times the IRS gave the wrong answer to taxpayers seeking help to comply with the tax code in 1993 (taxpayers are still liable for errors caused by bad IRS advice): 8,500,000

*—from **Daniel J. Mitchell**,* "577,951,692,634 Reasons...and Counting: Why a Flat Tax Is Needed to Reform the IRS"



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## REMEMBER FREEDOM?

Many thoughtful Supreme Court justices, including no less a liberal than Arthur Goldberg, formerly considered it self-evident that the U.S. Constitution protects many private rights of association, including a private club's right to determine its own membership and a business's right to choose its own partners. Unfortunately, since Goldberg cited those examples, various levels of government have proceeded to order private clubs and partnerships to admit unwanted new members, and elite legal opinion has ceased to concern itself with rights of private association when handing down its orders.

As freedom of association has decayed, we have begun to miss it. "We live in fear of someone reporting us for discrimination," said the proprietor of a London, California service that offers female drivers to women who need rides late at night. When the city council took up a bill to prohibit employers from discriminating on the basis of appearance, Santa Cruz mortician Eric Bianco fumed that "I serve people in their seventies and eighties who have lost loved ones. The last thing wives want to see at their husband's funeral is a punk with a pin through his nose."

Ironically it is diversity, that great shibboleth of our day, that suffers most when association is compelled. Surely the most inane modern fallacy is the one about how each place of work should resemble a microcosm of all human nature and all demographic variety, with exact proportions of guys and gals, introverts and gladhanders, old and young, hedonists and prudes, Scots and Hottentots, boors and sensitivity buffs, with the radio in the background shuttling every few minutes from pop to classical to talk to reggae to big band to silence. A nation that truly cared about diversity would allow the nourishing of both bawdy calendars at some workplaces and Bible readings at others, rather than insist on some homogenized middle ground in which no one could have either. The genuine diversity of freedom and pluralism—not the ersatz diversity of government compulsion—is the best way to make sure the job we really want is there when we start looking for it.

For all its risks and disappointments, liberty—the simple policy of refusing to force others to deal with us against their will and without their consent—turns out to be the best method to elicit the greatest willingness to cooperate from those who might do us good. No wonder that until recently, free association was considered the crowning glory of a liberal and civilized society. It can be again.

*—Adapted from* ***Walter Olson****'s recent book* The Excuse Factory.

## STOP ME BEFORE I CONCEIVE AGAIN

The wheels of bureaucracy are awfully slow, but is government red tape really to blame for a Washington woman's bearing one illegitimate baby after another? Yes, if you believe the *Washington Post.*

In a recent front-page story, "Birth Control and Bureaucracy: Poor Women Seeking Sterilization Face a Snarl of Red Tape," the *Post* highlighted Linda Parrish's plight. In a breathless lead paragraph, readers learn that at age 29 and just about to deliver her fifth child, Parrish wanted to make sure she wouldn't become pregnant again: "Between contractions, [she] begged the obstetrician to tie her tubes." But he refused. Parrish had forgotten a consent form, one of many requirements that Congress enacted to protect poor women from involuntary sterilization.

As Parrish hit one bureaucratic snag after another in her bid for a Medicaid-financed tubal ligation, she became pregnant again and again. Then, the *Post* reports, "just months after Angel's birth, Parrish discovered she was pregnant with Precious, now one."

Discovered? Like a magic prize in a cereal box? As in so many *Post* stories on the poor, Parrish is portrayed as a one-dimensional victim, hapless and entirely beholden to outside forces beyond her control.

There are, of course, a whole host of measures other than sterilization that Parrish, pregnant with her ninth child when the story ran, could have taken to avoid pregnancy. But they were barely mentioned in the 2,300-word article.

The *Washington Post* isn't normally keen on stories exposing red tape—an implicitly anti-government message. But in this case the paper has apparently subordinated its sympathies for big government to its love of "victims." Call it a labor of love.

*—Evan Gahr is a former* New York Post *media critic and frequent contributor to* TAE.

## EMASCULATING THE U.S. MILITARY

The current administration's combination of slashed defense budgets, various crusades in political correctness, and endless overseas "peacekeeping" missions are exacting a painful toll on America's armed forces.

Our best military pilots, for instance, are now bleeding out of the services at alarming rates. Though the bonuses being paid to veteran Air Force pilots who sign up for another hitch have risen dramatically, fewer than three out of ten fliers are accepting the offer. And the outflow is increasing. In 1997, the Air Force lost 632 pilots. In the first five months of the current fiscal year they have already lost 775, leaving the service expecting to be more than 835 pilots short of its requirements this year. That gap is expected to double over the next few years. In the Navy, only *ten percent* of eligible carrier pilots are taking bonuses and signing back up.

America's military is by far the world's most impressive. It wasn't made that way, though, by leaders who take military competence for granted. Nor will it retain its formidability if it continues to be overseen by civilian authorities utterly lacking understanding of, and appreciation for, military life.



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By Karl Zinsmeister

# Indicators

## Special Edition on School Reform

*In this installment of* INDICATORS, *and the one following in our next issue,* TAE *explores the status of U.S. school reform.*

### OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISASTER DEEPENS

In February, results of the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) were released. They showed that the average U.S. high school senior's math and science literacy is among the worst in the developed world. Among the 21 nations participating, **the U.S. ranked last or nearly last in most categories**—last in physics, for instance, tied for last in advanced mathematics. Worse, none of the Asian nations that tend to do best in these subjects were even included in the study; the U.S. flopped amidst competition from the likes of New Zealand, Hungary, and Cyprus.

There is no shortage of other evidence ringing out the same warning. A report published in *Education Week* earlier in 1998 noted that close to *half* of all U.S. fourth- and eighth-graders now score below the "basic" level in national tests of reading, science, and math.

Not even America's academic elite are being well-educated. In the TIMSS study, **our *top* students also scored far below counterparts from other nations.** The main obstacle to sweeping public school reform these days is the overconfidence of typical middle-class parents that while many public schools may be educating kids poorly, their own local suburban campus is doing just fine. As these results show, even our better public schools are quite mediocre compared to those in other lands.

These schooling failures will eventually tell in various kinds of international competition. What's particularly worrying is that, **nearly two decades after the education alarm was first sounded** in the early '80s, **with huge new influxes of money and reform advice having been dispatched** in the meantime, **things are still getting worse** in our public schools, not better. The 1997 annual report of the National Education Goals Panel, sponsored by the President and the nation's governors, found that national school performance declined in more areas during the year (seven) than it improved (six).

**The Urban Public School Mess**

Conditions in our nation's capital are representative of public school failures in scores of American cities

| | |
|---|---|
| Annual spending per pupil | |
| Washington, D.C. public schools: | $7,300 |
| National average for private schools: | $3,100 |
| Dropout rate, D.C. public schools: | 40 percent |
| School security aides working in D.C. public schools found by the city auditor to have a police record: | 53 out of 211 |
| Teachers saying classroom disrespect is a serious problem | |
| D.C. public schools: | 31 percent |
| National average for inner-city private schools: | 3 percent |

**Source:** U.S. Department of Education; D.C. Board of Education; Heritage Foundation; *Associated Press.*

When the TIMSS results were released, Secretary of Education Richard Riley described the U.S. performance as "unacceptable." To this, Stanford economist Thomas Sowell responded, "Nonsense! Such dismal results have been accepted for years and will be accepted for years to come, so long as the National Education Association continues to contribute millions of dollars to political campaigns."

He continued: "From the standpoint of the NEA, the American public schools are not a failure but a big great success. These schools provide NEA members with jobs where they have iron-clad tenure, automatic raises, and no accountability for bad performances by their students or themselves. The public schools also have a virtual monopoly on the supply of schoolchildren, except for those whose parents are affluent enough to be able to afford private schools or dedicated enough to homeschool their children. What this all adds up to is that the public schools can do pretty much whatever they want to, including avoiding academic training and indulging themselves in all sorts of fads."

Leading education researcher (and Democrat) Chester Finn recently registered a similar argument: "**The public school system as we know it has proved that it cannot fix itself.** It is an ossified government monopoly that functions largely for the benefit of its employees and interest groups rather than that of children and taxpayers. American education needs a radical overhaul."

The one ray of good news in all this: there are hints that perhaps—just maybe—**the American public is beginning to awake from its deep sleep of complacency over the state of our public schools.** A Gallup Poll released in January, *before* the international TIMSS results became known, showed that a majority of Americans—53 percent—are now dissatisfied with their local schools. Other behavioral and polling evidence summarized on the next page likewise suggests we may be approaching the critical mass of public revulsion that will be needed to spark the dramatic reforms our weak schools need.



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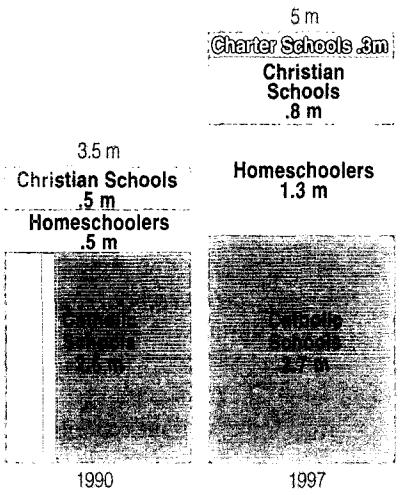
## ARE AMERICANS READY FOR DRAMATIC SCHOOL REFORM?

Until recently, any proposals that would dramatically shake up the U.S. education system were political non-starters. Vouchers, school choice, for-profit schools, homeschooling, charter schools—these were all treated as extreme measures by politicians and most of the public, who preferred to tinker with modest public school reforms instead. But that is now changing, as many Americans have finally become fed up with second-rate schooling.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of the public's new openness to bold course-correction is the fact that more parents are voting with their feet against the public schools. Catholic schools have reversed decades of sharp enrollment declines, and actually grew by 200,000 students from 1990 to 1997. Enrollments at other Christian schools have doubled in the last ten years. There are more than a quarter-million students in charter schools, compared to none a few years ago. And the popularity of homeschooling has tripled this decade, to encompass 1.3 million children.

**Voting with Their Feet**

Children Enrolled in Alternatives to Public Schools



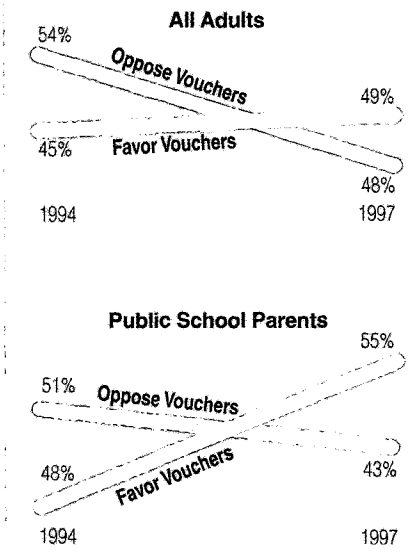

**Source:** Nat'l Catholic Education Association; Home School Legal Defense Association of Christian Schools International; Center for Education Reform.

The public hunger for better schooling is even deeper than these enrollments in alternative institutions indicate. When Phi Delta Kappa, the professional education association, asked current public school parents in 1997 where they would send their child **if they could choose any public, private, or church-run facility, 31 percent said they would bail out of their current public school.**

This same survey found that the public now favors, for the first time, offering public funding to parents who send their children to non-public schools:

**The Public Favors School Vouchers**

A proposal has been made that would allow parents to send their children to any public, private,or church-related school they choose. For those parents choosing non-public schools, the government would pay all or part of the tuition. Would you favor or oppose this in your state?




**Source:** 29th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup *Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Public Schools.*

These are remarkable shifts. As recently as the early 1990s, Americans resisted the idea of using public funding in private schools by as much as three to one.

Disillusioned citizens are also warming to more radical reforms like homeschooling. Back in 1985, only 16 percent of respondents thought homeschooling was "a good thing for the nation." By 1997, that had jumped to 36 percent.

This public rethinking about what's going to be needed to fix our schools is still developing, but it has already gone further than most people realize. A 1997 poll conducted for the Democratic Leadership Council uncovered this finding:

**More Money or More Choice?**

Some say to improve our educational system, we must spend more money and resources. Others say our educational system will only improve through more choice and competition among schools. Which is closer to your view?

| | General public | Democrats |
|---|---|---|
| Spend more | 39% | 45% |
| More choice and competition | 53 | 49 |
| Don't know | 8 | 6 |

**Source:** Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, 1997.

Asked in this same poll how they'd react if Democratic Party leaders were to back "public funding for…disadvantaged students to attend private or parochial schools," fully 69 percent of respondents said they would look more favorably on such politicians.

Though opponents of school choice claim it would hurt minorities, minorities are now the very strongest supporters of this reform. A 1997 survey for the Joint Center on Political and Economic Studies showed that **57 percent of blacks (and climbing) now favor vouchers.** Among blacks of early parenting ages, eight out of ten are supporters. **Hispanics are even more enthusiastic**—65 percent say yes to letting public funds be used to educate children in private or parochial schools.

A final criticism of school choice—that private schools serve only privileged families—has also been dashed recently. A study by Congress's Joint Economic Committee found that even today, with no vouchers to help with tuition, fully one out of every four private school students comes from a family with an annual income under $35,000. Close to half earn less than $50,000.

Alternatives to today's public schools are now wanted by all kinds of people.

**In Indicators next issue**

*How important is spending to school success? A summary of early results from school choice experiments around the nation. And who are the nation's biggest hypocrites when it comes to blocking public school reform?*



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# "Live" with TAE

HE BROUGHT TO LIFE A MEDIEVAL HERO CAPABLE OF MOVING MODERN MEN AND WOMEN WITH SURPRISING FORCE. BRAVERY, MORAL STRENGTH, AND HONOR ALSO FIGURE IN HIS LATEST MOVIE.

## Randall Wallace

*The man behind* Braveheart*—the epic story of the thirteenth-century Scotsman who led his people against the British ("I'm William Wallace, and the rest of you will be spared. Go back to England and tell them...Scotland is free!")—is Randall Wallace, a 48-year-old American Southerner of Scots-Irish ancestry.*

*It was during a visit to Edinburgh Castle that Randall Wallace was first inspired to write the script that eventually became the film starring Mel Gibson. Beyond collecting the 1995 Academy Award for Best Picture,* Braveheart *helped ignite today's Scottish independence movement.*

*Wallace's latest project,* The Man in the Iron Mask, *marks his debut as a film director. Adapted by him from the classic Alexandre Dumas novel, the movie is the story of the Three Musketeers and their struggle during the days of Louis XIV to replace the French king with a nobler ruler. The picture, which stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Jeremy Irons, John Malkovich, and Gerard Depardieu, is, like* Braveheart, *laced with portrayals of men who are defined by a strong moral code. And no wonder: Wallace is himself a devout Christian who draws inspiration for his work from the Bible.*

TAE *contributor John Meroney sat down with Wallace at the MGM/UA headquarters in Santa Monica, California.*

**I wanted to live my life for a purpose that was bigger than myself and my own selfishness.**

Randall Wallace directs Leonardo DiCaprio.

Illustration by Lucinda S. Levine

**TAE:** Have you visited Scotland since you filmed *Braveheart?*

**WALLACE:** Yes. My father had never been to Scotland and we went over for the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Stirling. It so happened that on that date, the Scots had just voted to form their own parliament.

**TAE:** The Scottish independence movement seems to be an example of life imitating art. Does this say something about the power of film?

**WALLACE:** Yes, and in fact, the day we arrived, the headlines of the newspapers were, "Bravehearts Win Vote." They refer to the Scottish separatists as the "Bravehearts." It was haunting to see it in the newspaper in that way because I remember sitting in my office at home in California typing "Braveheart" in the middle of the title page.

**TAE:** So why aren't you personally more outspoken about the independence movement?

**WALLACE:** I think to some extent it's a violation of professional ethics when an artist or minister or someone else in the capacity of his profession gets involved with politics. I think everyone ought to be a responsible citizen and speak out as much as he wants. But for me to say, if you like what I've done then you should vote as I vote—that's wrong. For a minister from the pulpit to try to tell a congregation how to vote offends me. And when I see actors use the Academy Awards as a podium for their political positions, I think that's a violation of their relationship with the audience and their own art. I try to stay out of that. What I generally say is, I'm an American, and it's not for me to tell the Scots what they should do.

**TAE:** How did you make the transition from divinity school student to Hollywood filmmaker?

**WALLACE:** I always loved telling stories. Southerners are born storytellers. It's part of that Irish-



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Scottish thing, too. It's also a tradition of the tent revival. Growing up, we went to church a lot. My folks were very quiet believers, but there were times when I was in church 20 or 30 hours a week. You would hear orators who could stand in a pulpit and keep an audience spellbound for an hour.

**TAE:** That does seem to be part of the Southern tradition.

**WALLACE:** Yes, but the better orators were sitting in a rocking chair at the country store. My father was a traveling salesman, so I heard it from him, too. And I always loved to write and tell stories. I was never convinced I was going to be a minister, but I knew I wanted to live my life for a purpose that was bigger than myself, and my own selfishness.

**TAE:** That's a theme in *The Man in the Iron Mask.*

**WALLACE:** That's right. John Malkovich, who plays Athos, delivers this speech that rips my heart out. He's talking about the musketeers and says, "Once, all of us believed in serving something greater than ourselves." Aramis, who was a priest, had his faith. Porthos had a lust for life. D'Artagnan believed in devotion to duty. And Athos believed in his son. But they all had a common dream that once they would serve a king great enough for the throne.

I grew up in a place that believes that sort of thing. Tennessee is the "Volunteer State"—you ask for ten thousand and you get a hundred thousand.

**TAE:** Isn't the ministry a higher calling?

**WALLACE:** Well, I was suspicious of the notion that I could stand in a pulpit and tell other people how they ought to believe, live, and think. I wasn't sure about the idea of a guy who gets a salary from his church standing up in a pulpit and telling the farmer what percentage of his income he ought to give to the ministry, or how he should live his life. And I was skeptical that a twentysomething hotshot from seminary should tell some man who had a decent life trying to raise his family how he ought to live. I thought you ought to live first.

**TAE:** How did your time at Duke University shape your future?

**WALLACE:** I studied under the writer Reynolds Price, but majored in religion and considered going to the seminary. My folks had paid for my education but I felt graduate school was up to me. So I applied for a Rockefeller Fellowship. I wrote on the Rockefeller application that what I wanted to do upon ordination was to enter the military and be a chaplain.

**TAE:** Vietnam was raging at the time.

**WALLACE:** Yes, and I felt that it was a raw deal that as undergraduates we had gotten military exemption. Why shouldn't our lives have been disrupted? And if there was ever a place where there was hell, it was with those soldiers in Vietnam. I thought that's where I should be.

**I always loved telling stories. Southerners are born storytellers. It's part of that Irish-Scottish thing, too. It's also a tradition of the tent revival.**

The guy doing the interview for the fellowship committee had a peace sign on his tie and said, "I'm troubled by the fact that anyone who wants to be a seminarian would go into the military because our army is basically demonic." I said, "If I become a minister, then I would intend to try to minister to the people who I think need it the most, and the fact that you may or may not agree with what our government is doing has nothing to do with what those men are doing." I couldn't understand anyone who believed that the guys who had followed the call of their country didn't deserve to have someone hold their hand when they were dying. They shouldn't have somebody go there and pray for them as they're bleeding to death?

I didn't get the fellowship.

**TAE:** What did that experience say to you?

**WALLACE:** It said if I could write a story about soldiers, then I'm not just making an argument, I'm showing their humanity. The man who asked me that question failed to recognize the humanity of the people who were out there fighting. *Braveheart* is a pure sermon that I could preach from any pulpit, but more people would get the message if it were a film. It's about whether integrity costs something and what it takes to pay the price.

**TAE:** You also began writing while at Duke.

**WALLACE:** I was writing songs when I was a student, and even started a record company. I had a couple of local hits in the little towns around Durham and in Virginia.

I didn't want to go to New York, and L.A. was acid rock. So I went to Nashville. But I realized I wasn't going to go far there because I wasn't a country songwriter. So I came to California and started writing novels. I had great reviews where my work was compared to Robert Penn Warren and Charles Dickens. But my books, which I had worked on for a year or two each, sold about 2,000 copies a piece. I would have qualified for welfare on what I was making.

My wife was pregnant with our first son when I went to Scotland. We walked into Edinburgh Castle and saw a statue of William Wallace. I knew then I had come across an amazing story, but it was years before I felt I had the tools to write it.

**TAE:** What filmmakers do you look to for inspiration?

**WALLACE:** I love Clint Eastwood's work. His westerns are accessible, charismatic, and enter-



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taining. They're also about a code. I love John Huston. He's a great model for me. And *The Man Who Would Be King* is one of the greatest movies ever made. I love epic stories such as *Spartacus* and *A Man for All Seasons.*

My credo as a filmmaker is that I want to make the kind of movie that I want to see. All my life, I wanted to see a movie like *Braveheart.* So I thought, Let's do that. *The Man in the Iron Mask* is exactly that kind of movie, too. What I mostly draw from for inspiration is literature. And the Bible. There would be many parallels between it and *Braveheart.*

**TAE:** You didn't mention any of John Ford's westerns starring John Wayne. There isn't much moral ambiguity in those films.

**WALLACE:** Honestly, I don't care for those films all that much. The movies I'm citing are different. For example, look at Eastwood. A gunfighter comes into town and shoots four other gunfighters off the fence. Now that's morally interesting. The musketeers in *The Man in the Iron Mask* have a code. That's the way I wrote and directed them. The great errors one could make with a movie like this are to make the musketeers buffoons. That's been done often. The other is to do the "one for all, all for one" approach. But that doesn't mean anything in human terms. When I was in seminary, I came across a phrase by Reinhold Niebuhr: The genius of Jesus of Nazareth is that He found the holy not among the monastic but among the profane.

**TAE:** Will we see that reflected in other Randall Wallace projects?

**WALLACE:** Well, I've written a script based on my father-in-law's experience in World War II. He was a bombardier who was shot down over Germany and put in a prison camp for almost three years. The other guys coming into the camp were also bomber crews, and they were all under the control of the Luftwaffe. They were bombing the homes and the families of the guards.

But the ones who ran the camps weren't SS. Most of them were Nazis, but they considered themselves the spiritual descendants of the Red Baron, and thought Hitler was a thug. At the end of the war, one of the leaders of the camp came to a POW and said, "I have been ordered to execute all of you. I think that's an unconscionable order, but when I refuse to do it and they come to carry it out, all I've got to stop the SS is a bunch of guys with one eye and one arm and one leg. But you've got guys who are warriors. I'm not going to turn you loose as enemies of my country, but I will give you weapons if you'll swear you'll fight under my command. I'll ambush the SS when they come."

***Braveheart* is about whether integrity costs something, and what it takes to pay the price.**

Now if that's not a hell of a story, I've never seen one. So I've grafted that with the story of Dietrich Bonhöffer, a committed Christian theologian who instead of running for Switzerland like most German theologians, decided to stay. He was hung on a meat hook at Schönberg prison for having conspired to put the bomb at Hitler's feet.

**TAE:** I understand you've received calls from the press asking, "What's this we hear about Randy Wallace trying to tell a story about a good Nazi?"

**WALLACE:** Yes, and I understand why the question comes up. With people out there saying the Holocaust didn't happen, it's certainly a fair inquiry. But I look at it this way: the man who says, "I was ordered to do it but I refused to do it" is the one who calls into judgment the person who says, "I did the unconscionable because I was ordered to do it." A story like this makes us confront questions such as, What is heroism? What is good and evil? That's exciting. The guys who would take on a story like that are people such as Eastwood, Huston, and Ford. In *Unforgiven,* you're looking at a man who outwardly has almost nothing to admire, but you discover he's the one guy you do admire. We're all sinners. Accepting that, where do we go?

**TAE:** You're also working on a project about Vietnam.

**WALLACE:** Yes. It's based on a book called *We Were Soldiers Once...And Young.* It's about a battle of incredible courage and commitment involving the U.S. 7th Cavalry. I knew from the moment I read the prologue I was going to have to try to get involved with it. The authors say, "Hollywood has gotten the story of the Vietnam vet wrong every damn time. They have whetted the knives of twisted politics on the bones of our dead brothers." I do this instead of preach sermons.

**TAE:** Is there a message worthy of a sermon in *The Man in the Iron Mask?*

**WALLACE:** What drew me to the story was the image of a man locked in an iron mask. It was something so powerful and mysterious, like one of those great universal themes that resonate in Christianity: our true identity is locked away, and our faces are one thing, our hearts another.

When I read the story, I also got intrigued by the notion of people whose great glories were apparently behind them. They had to confront the issue of whether they could affirm the dreams they once had held.

**TAE:** How did you come across the project?

**WALLACE:** MGM told me they were interested in doing it, and asked me to read it. I had never read the book, and frankly found it a very difficult story to follow. As a child in Memphis I had



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a Classic Comic of *The Man in the Iron Mask,* and even then, I couldn't really comprehend the story. I defy anyone to read the novel and then tell me what the story is. Alexandre Dumas wrote it in serialization and it was never meant to be a novel. But it's about people having to find faith even when it seems that their glories are over. And it was a great one for me because I had just done *Braveheart* and everybody I knew was asking, "How do you follow that?"

**TAE:** Did MGM also want you to direct it?

**WALLACE:** I wanted to direct it, and I had wanted to direct *Braveheart* as well. I went to Scotland on my own money, scouted locations, and developed the whole project. One journalist wrote that Mel Gibson had decided to do the story of William Wallace, and hired me because my name was Wallace, thinking I would do a good job. Mel would never say that, but that's the way the thing gets perceived. For me the issue was one of control. When you give a script to a director, he has to become the captain of the ship. You may have made the ship and charted its course, but when you get out on the stormy seas, there's got to be somebody there who decides, "I know we want to get over there, but the winds are blowing that way and we've got to tack this way to get there."

I wanted to be the guy making those decisions on *The Man in the Iron Mask.* I wasn't guaranteed that I could direct it, but I thought the best way I can go at it is to start by writing the best script possible.

**TAE:** Has being a Southerner worked to your disadvantage in Hollywood?

**WALLACE:** I certainly don't come out of the film school or Hollywood establishment track, but who's to say that being an outsider isn't an advantage in this world?

I once had a conversation with a man who became my former boss. We were arguing about the quality I wanted in a show we were doing, and he said, "I would like to do it that way but they won't get it in unwashed Nebraska." And I said, "I'm from unwashed Tennessee and when we turn on the television, we don't say, Boy are we stupid." I knew right then I was headed for the door. *(laughs)*

**TAE:** One could make a pretty good argument that your industry has a track record of ignoring the "great unwashed" of middle America.

**WALLACE:** Audiences are far smarter than people in the industry often want to give them credit for. I saw *Unforgiven* in South Carolina, and that audience got every nuance. They just loved all the subtleties and depth. I saw it again out here in Los Angeles at the Writers Guild Theater, and most of it seemed to whistle past their ears. They just didn't seem to get it. And I thought, Who's really sophisticated here—those people in flip-flops and Bermuda shorts in South Carolina who get the power of the piece, or those people who hear a funny joke and turn to each other and instead of laughing say, "Now that was funny"?

**Leonardo DiCaprio is of a generation not steeped in the romantic idea that one is purified through suffering, so he had questions about the Philippe character. I told Leo there are examples of this really happening.**

**TAE:** Does coming from outside the industry help you be more creative, more in touch with the audience?

**WALLACE:** I believe it does. I loaded trucks for summer jobs, carried mail, and put myself through seminary teaching karate. My first job out of seminary was head of animal shows at Opryland. I trained animals and shoveled out goat cages. To me that's a badge of honor. I wouldn't trade those experiences.

**TAE:** Yet *Braveheart* struck a chord not only with moviegoers, but also in the industry.

**WALLACE:** I get letters from people all over the world. Ten-year-olds write to me and say, "*Braveheart* is my favorite movie." They long to be told the things it tells them.

*Braveheart* says there is a price to be paid. What bothers me about my generation of baby boomers is this notion that there's some easy way to get to Nirvana. The idea seems to be, Just smoke, drink, and swallow this—then you'll feel good. As opposed to, Pay this price, bleed here. "Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." I didn't make that one up. *(laughs)* That one's been around a while, and the reason it has is because it resonates. It's true.

**TAE:** As someone with a strong religious background, how do you feel about the way your industry often stereotypes Christians?

**WALLACE:** I'm no more comfortable with the shows that try to espouse religion than I am with the shows that attack it. I don't believe in dogma. What I mean by that is if I could understand God, he wouldn't be God. There's a rash of stuff right now about angels, but to me the idea of angels walking around in tangible form is as ludicrous as fairy godmothers.

**TAE:** Do you think Hollywood discriminates against conservatives?

**WALLACE:** Well, I've been in meetings where people who I like and respect have said things like, "Don't do business with so and so. He's a Republican." To me, that's like saying we ought to get together a blacklist, figure out who the conservatives are and make sure they don't have work.

As for my own politics, I've voted both ways and will continue to. I voted for Jimmy Carter once, and think he's at least as decent as anyone



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who ever held the White House. I've voted for Republicans, too. I don't vote party.

I often find there's a problem when people know that I come from a seminary background. I'll get this expectation that I should support their cause or be involved. I find people who want to use that, and I despise it.

**TAE:** Ronald Reagan once said about sex in the movies that it was more interesting when it just showed someone's hands putting the "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door. Leave the rest to the imagination. What's your philosophy?

**WALLACE:** I don't care for prudes any more than I care for pornographers. All I know to do is what strikes me as right. Martin Luther was really earthy, and God made sex like he made everything else. I thought the love scenes in *Braveheart* were beautiful. They were love scenes, not sex scenes.

**TAE:** Do films lose their power if they're done in service of political ideology?

**WALLACE:** Yes, and it also dilutes the universality of it. The other day I walked into a deli where I regularly eat breakfast and a man said to me, "Excuse me, Mr. Wallace, but the waitress just told me you wrote *Braveheart.* I have to tell you that's my favorite film of all time. I've seen it eight times. It moves me tremendously, and I just want to thank you for having done it." He shook my hand and walked away.

When the waitress came back I said, "Who was that?" She said, "He's the head of the porn industry in California." I'm sitting there thinking, Prince Charles has invited us to show *The Man in the Iron Mask* as a royal premiere, and then this porno guy compliments me on *Braveheart.* Kings and rogues see the work, and it speaks to them wherever they are.

And that's what's so fantastic about a movie. It is the most universal artistic medium that I know of. When I left seminary, I felt guilty about leaving friends who were going to go be the pastors of small churches and comfort the suffering, hold the hands of the dying, feed the poor, and all those things ministers are supposed to do. But my friends from the seminary now say, "You have the ability to write and make films and that's your calling."

**TAE:** One of the common threads in *Braveheart* and *The Man in the Iron Mask* is this unabashed depiction of strong male role models.

**WALLACE:** I wrote a poem in the dedication of the novel of *Braveheart* and one of the lines is, "To you who know the simple truth and show it near and far / It is the tales we tell ourselves that make us who we are." I see the telling of a tale as a way to give us models of who we might be.

I'm not as brave, consistent, or as strong as the characters I like to write about, but they speak to me. We say in *Braveheart,* "Every man dies, not every man really lives."

These two films are about another time only because it seemed the best way to tell the whole tale. I see as a great challenge conveying those values and role models in the present tense, and I hope to do that in future work.

**TAE:** In directing *The Man in the Iron Mask,* how did you get Leonardo DiCaprio into the spirit of the part of Philippe?

**WALLACE:** Leo is of a generation not steeped in the romantic idea that one is purified through suffering, so he had questions about the Philippe character. He believed that Philippe, having been horribly imprisoned for so long, would be catatonic, crazy. Like many his age, one of his frames of reference was *The Basketball Diaries,* where a young person is confronted with a loveless life, or his father has abandoned him, or his friends are suffering, so he becomes a drug addict. Leo's generation views that as the romantic or heroic option.

But I wanted to convey to Leo that the whole theme of the story is that there is another option. There's a tradition stretching far beyond Alexandre Dumas that you can "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" and come out a better person. That's the approach I wanted.

Here are two identical brothers, one's treated with idolatry and becomes a demon. The other is treated like garbage and becomes ennobled. I told Leo there are examples of this really happening, such as Nelson Mandela. He's someone who was put into a hole for years, and emerged not as a catatonic puddle of drool, but as a man capable of leading his country. That's the image that suddenly broke through to Leo.

**TAE:** Was DiCaprio originally in your mind when the studio approached you about making this film?

**WALLACE:** No. That was a couple of years ago, and I frankly thought that the slacker generation was just a bunch of punks. I didn't distinguish one from the other. But I was aware that there was this handsome young actor named Leonardo DiCaprio whom everyone said had been brilliant in *What's Eating Gilbert Grape,* which I hadn't seen.

I don't think of any actors when I'm writing. I didn't write *Braveheart* with Mel Gibson in mind. The only way to write with any integrity is to make characters become alive on the page. At the time we began talking with Leo, Titanic was assumed to be the biggest disaster in the history of Hollywood.

**TAE:** The brilliantly prescient casting of Randall Wallace.

**WALLACE:** Well, I had to introduce the cast to the Prince of Wales at the royal premiere in London, and I said I had gotten a lot of congratulations about my foresight in casting a young man with this frenzy of publicity about him. But we didn't put Leo in the movie because of the light of celebrity shining on him; we cast him because of the light of life that shines within him. That's the truth. Casting a movie because someone's hot at the time is the way to make a stinker.

**TAE:** DiCaprio seems to have a sense of optimism and innocence about him, similar to the picture itself.

**WALLACE:** That's right. Leo's not cynical. He can play a character who walks down a very dark road, but inherently there's a goodness and faith in him that comes through.

The critics in the major cities have almost universally savaged this picture. Critics tend to like movies about cynicism. This picture is innocent. Its heart is open. But in the small towns, they've loved it. Audiences see it and applaud at the end. I think many critics would have been happier if the point had been, "you put a man in an iron mask and he becomes broken and hates the world like most of us hate the world." But that's not the story I wanted to tell. That's why Leo was a great guy to do it.



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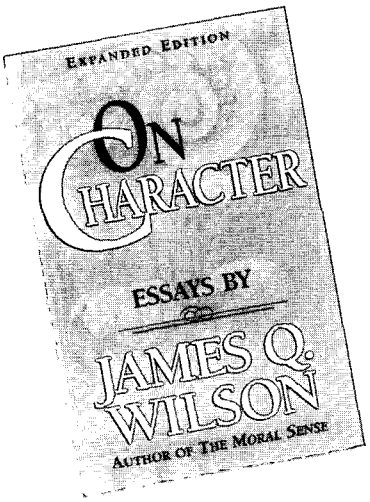


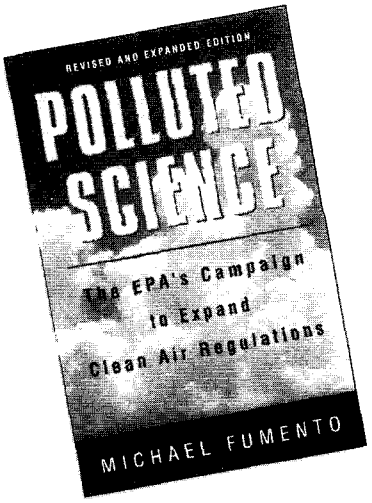


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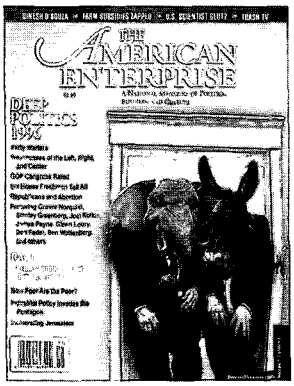


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DAY CARE

# the problem with day care

Meryl Frank is an expert on child care. For five years she ran a Yale University program that studied parental leave.... Frank went back to work part time when her son, Isaac, was 5 months old, and in the two years since then she has changed childcare arrangements nine times.

Her travails began with a well-regarded day care center near her suburban New Jersey home. On the surface, it was great. One staff member for every three babies, a sensitive administrator, clean facilities. "But when I went in," Frank recalls, "I saw this line of cribs and all these babies with their arms out crying, wanting to be picked up. I felt like crying myself." She walked out without signing Isaac up and went through a succession of other unsatisfactory situations—a babysitter who couldn't speak English, a woman who cared for 10 children in her home at once—before settling on a neighborhood woman who took Isaac into her home. "She was fabulous," Frank recalls wistfully. Three weeks after that babysitter started, she got sick and had to quit. Frank advertised for help in the newspaper and got 30 inquiries but no qualified babysitter. (When Frank asked one prospective nanny about her philosophy of discipline, the woman replied: "If he touched the stove, I'd punch him.") A few weeks later she finally hired her tenth babysitter. "She's a very nice young woman," Frank says. "Unfortunately, she has to leave in May. And I just found out I'm pregnant again and due in June."

That's what happens when a *pro* tries to get help.

So begins a story in a special issue of *Newsweek* on family trends. While this many day care problems in two years is probably not average, it is by no means unusual. Mismatches, repeated disappointments, and occasional horror stories are the rule, not the exception, when it comes to hiring parental substitutes today—as you'll quickly discover once you start interviewing a cross-section of day care users about their actual experiences.

In a perfect world, there would be an abundance of intelligent, well-balanced, devoted individuals willing to attend lavishly and patiently to the demands of strangers' children—enough so that every family who wanted could have their own full-time loving surrogate. These dream workers would all be willing to provide their services so cheaply that

BY KARL ZINSMEISTER



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there would be little or no strain on family finances. And they would remain with the same family year after year, meshing perfectly with child, parents, and surroundings.

But there are no dream caretakers. There is very little that even comes close. In real life, purchased care is rarely more than a stopgap. That's not my verdict. It's the verdict of parents themselves. Take Joanie Colquitt, mother and holder of a master's degree in social psychology. In a long letter she wrote me a few years ago, Ms. Colquitt details a quite typical set of experiences:

> I can remember when I considered sending my own first child to day care. I had spent so long on my education and we did truly need the money. So I visited what was, at that time, the number-one day care chain in the country. What I saw there broke my heart. Babies were lined up, six in a row, crying, waiting for their meals. Toddlers were still in their cribs, some with tear-stained cheeks simply sitting there with no toys, no companionship, with looks of having given up any hope for personal attention a long time ago.... There was a bucket on the the floor next to the high chairs where several rags floated in dirty looking water. The helper pulled one out to wipe a baby's face. There were 15-month-old children who could not even walk, I believe because they had not been allowed out of their cribs enough to develop properly.
>
> I have visited other day care centers that were cleaner, and had academic programs and activities galore. However, the atmosphere, to me, was still negative. The children were not loved the way they needed to be and you could tell. They looked tired and kind of washed out.

Author Linda Burton is another person who has described in detail what she came across while scouring her hometown (the Washington, D.C. area) for day care:

> In one instance, I found the "absolutely marvelous" family day care provider, recommended by trusted friends, sleeping on her sofa while 11 children (she had informed me that she only cared for five) wandered aimlessly around in front of the blaring TV. Another time, on an unannounced visit, I found that the "highly recommended" licensed day care provider confined seven preschoolers to her tiny dining room. I found them huddled together, leaning over a barricade to watch a TV program showing in the adjacent room.

**From a child's perspective, the typical day care arrangement is a puzzling, often chilly, slightly sad arrangement.**

These are not isolated anecdotes. Anyone investigating the world of full-time day care quickly amasses files of such testimony. A few years ago the Metropolitan Toronto Social Planning Council investigated a sample of 281 day care homes. They reported that a small number were genuinely stimulating, and another small number were out-and-out abusive. The large majority, however, provided care that was merely indifferent. Only a few of the caregivers studied were able to make themselves genuinely interested in each of their individual enrollees. In a significant minority of cases, youngsters were simply ignored most of the time.

How do parents react to the disappointing standards of most hired care? Very often, by lowering their expectations. I was struck by a conversation my wife and I once had with three of our Washington, D.C. neighbors who used significant amounts of substitute care for their children. We asked them how they liked their current sitters. "This one's good with children," replied the first. "She's always proselytizing for the Jehovah's Witnesses, though, and sometimes that annoys me." Another volunteered about her sitter: "She's great. Except that she's really incredibly lazy." "_____ is nice, and we're happy with her," answered the third, "but she smokes all the time, and never has the TV off."

Day care-using parents make minor compromises like these by the millions. And some end up facing much larger worries. Like the dual-career Washington, D.C. couple (the mother actually worked as a child care researcher at one of the local universities) who discovered that the Spanish-speaking woman they were dropping their nine-month-old off with was taking in several other babies without their knowledge, and regularly leaving them with her 12-year-old daughter while she went out to clean houses. (They discovered this only when one of the infants swallowed 30 aspirin tablets and ended up in a hospital.)

A telling example of how difficult it can be to accurately judge a hired caregiver involves professor Sandra Scarr. Scarr is one of the most zealous academic defenders of day care in the country. She argues regularly and vociferously in her writing and in media interviews that "day care can actually be good for children." Yet when Scarr employed babysitters for her own children, her day care expertise and enthusiasm were not enough to avoid problems. One day she returned from work to find her 18-month-old weeping. "Kathy hit me! Kathy hit me!," the toddler cried simply. Scarr found large, red welts on her daughter's body—"the sitter had beaten her badly." She expressed great frustration when told by police that there could be no prosecution without witnesses. Apparently without any sense of irony, Scarr complained bitterly that "no one was there to prevent the abuse or to testify about it."

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But physical dangers and out-and-out abuse are not the major problems associated with substitute parenting. Despite the screaming headlines, these are fairly unusual occurrences, thank goodness. The commoner, deeper drawback is simply that it is an emotionally unsatisfying substitute for the natural attentions of mother and father. From a youngster's perspective, the typical day care arrangement is a puzzling, often chilly, slightly sad arrangement. Unfortunately, very few discussions of day care look at things from that angle. "We could do with another Charles Dickens," suggests family historian John Sommerville, "to give us a child's-eye view" of the world of day care.

## DAY CARE AS IT REALLY IS

There's no need for anyone to write a book on what children encounter in a typical day care setting—because a writer named Deborah Fallows has already done that. Fallows (a Radcliffe graduate, linguist, and former assistant dean at Georgetown University who is married to *U.S. News* editor James Fallows) is not Charles Dickens. But in *A Mother's Work* she describes one-and-a-half years' worth of close observation in dozens of diverse day care centers scattered across Maryland, Washington, D.C., Texas, and Massachusetts.

While Fallows discovered no abuse, relatively little dirt, and adequate physical conditions in most centers, she nonetheless found the average child's experience frighteningly empty. This was a fairly typical visit:

> I settled into an inconspicuous corner of the room and began to watch the children.... Often, one child would attach himself to me—maybe going off for a few minutes but always coming back to say a few words...point to a shoe that need tying...or show me his tummy.
>
> The teacher watching the children tried her hardest, ad-libbing her way from one activity to the next. She put on a record and started to dance. One little blond boy started dancing along with her. A few others joined the group. Five or six gathered by some swinging cabinet doors that formed the partition between the play area and the rest of the room. One little girl sat by herself, crying softly in the corner. The rest wandered around....
>
> Then a fight erupted between two little boys, and the teacher had to stop dancing to break it up. Without her example, the dancing died off. She tried again a few minutes later but was interrupted this time by a small couple who tripped over each other....
>
> She gave up records then and tried reading a story. The same few eager dancers moved right in to listen, while the rest kept on swinging on the cabinet doors or aimlessly wandering. The little girl was still crying in her corner. After a short story, the teacher opened the large cabinet and pulled out some puppets. This immediately attracted the largest crowd of the morning. All but a few rushed right over to watch the show. But the brilliance of the idea dimmed after several moments. As her impromptu story line weakened, the toddlers drifted back to their swinging doors and wandering, shuffling their feet, chasing back and forth....
>
> Here as at other centers I visited, you could almost feel the morning driving itself toward the grand finale—lunch.

Fallows gives wrenching descriptions of children referred to by their teachers as "little boy" or "hey little girl," of activities that cater to the group average but leave quiet toddlers behind, of desperate notes pinned to youngsters' coats in which parents plead for extra attention or special comforts. She tells of caretakers who can't remember babies by name and description just a few months after they've graduated to an older group ("I'm not sure which one it was. They all do that after a while..."). There is much tedium, much bewilderment, many unconsoled tears. Children clamoring to go "to mommy's house," are quieted with small fibs ("yeah, mommy will be here soon"). In a situation that human biology guarantees no natural parent would ever have to face (four to ten same-aged youngsters per adult), tired teachers do what they can to get by.

Fallows' testimony is cool, relentlessly detailed, and very convincing. For individuals who have never visited average day care centers or thought much about what group care of infants and toddlers comprises—and how many adults, even prospective parents, have?—her observations will come as an upsetting revelation.

Another disturbingly realistic portrait of full-day hired childcare is provided by William and Wendy Dreskin in their book *The Day Care Decision*. For five years, the Dreskins co-directed their own non-profit nursery school and then day care center in the San Francisco area. Theirs was a very high quality program: teachers had a B.A. plus one year of graduate training, child to adult ratios were low, there was lots of educational equipment, and an intelligent curriculum. I know the Dreskins myself and can testify that they are extremely warm, wise, gentle individuals who have raised two great kids of their own—the kind of people who are naturals with children.

They started out with a half-day preschool, which was very successful. But with more and more dual-career parents demanding day-long care they



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found that a facility in use only three hours a day was becoming uneconomic. So they decided to expand into a full-day operation. "We were going to offer a quality program. We did not have the slightest suspicion that there might be a serious problem with even the best day care programs," they write.

Then they began to notice changes in their children. "Some of the same boys and girls we had known as nursery schoolers became different children when they were subjected to the stress of full-time day care." The Dreskins cite numerous specific cases to illustrate the alterations in personality they observed. Three year-olds who had been happy in a morning program began to withdraw, lash out, or cry for hours at a time. In the individual journals that were a standard part of the Dreskin's program, they began to dictate poignant pleas for more time with their parents. Some children lost previously acquired skills. Others began to refuse to take their toys home at night. ("What's the use? I'm here more than at home.")

The parents changed too. As they subconsciously transferred more and more of the responsibility for their child to the center, they gradually stopped coming to school meetings. They didn't check books out of the lending library. They asked fewer questions and dropped in on classes less. They showed up after work badly overstressed. "We typically saw scenes like this," the Dreskins write:

> Carl's mother arrives at 6:00 P.M., tired and frazzled. Carl tries to show her a picture he has painted. 'Show me later. Get your lunch box. Come on.' She is already halfway out the door. Carl trails after her, crying at the rebuff and at the effort of trying to balance his painting, his lunch box, his fire engine, and the cup of fruit salad he made in a cooking project that afternoon. We can tell from his mother's mood what sort of evening Carl will have. So much for the precious two hours he will get to spend with his mother between leaving day care and going to bed.

"For two years we watched day care children respond to the stresses of eight to ten hours a day of separation from their parents with tears, anger, withdrawal, or profound sadness," the Dreskins write, "and we found, to our dismay, that nothing in our own affection and caring for these children would erase this sense of loss and abandonment." They found themselves in a

## The Importance of Early Childhood Attachment

Numerous studies conducted in varied settings show clearly that the only way to build strong independence in children is to indulge their strong needs for *dependence* when they are very young. As Margaret Mead put it, "we do not know—man has never known—how else to give a human being a sense of selfhood and identity, a sense of the worth of the world." The path to the sturdy self lies directly across the lap of mother and father. There is no other route.

Parents who push their children out into the world before they are ready do them no favors. In my years of working in parent-cooperative play groups and nursery schools I myself have seen a number of strikingly disturbed and protestful children in this situation. I remember one two-year-old in Washington, D.C., for instance, who would shake and whimper, frantically clutch her stuffed animal, and finally curl herself on the floor in a tight crouch, refusing to be comforted, on many mornings when she was dropped off. Usually it was her babysitter who delivered her, only occasionally her mother, never her father.

"Human attachment" research has demonstrated that the early relationship between infants and preschoolers and their parents is the "foundation stone" of all subsequent personality development. It has also shown that even very marginal parental care is better for a young child than institutional care. As John Bowlby, the only psychiatrist who has twice received the American Psychiatric Association's highest award, warned, "a home must be very bad before it is bettered by a good institution."

A classic investigation by psychiatrist René Spitz, for instance, compared the development of infants raised by nurses in children's homes with infants raised by mothers confined to prison. He found that the infants in institutional child care exhibited evidence of depression and were stunted in their development, while the mother-raised children developed normally, despite the inhospitable setting and the fact that every one of the mothers was either mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed.

In groundbreaking mid-1950s research, Yale professors Sally Provence and Rose Lipton examined infants who spent a considerable part of their first year in superior institutions. They found that these youngsters suffered incapacities in all areas of physical and mental development compared to home-reared children, and their deficits did not disappear when they were moved into home settings by age one. Follow-up work showed that these parent-deprived children never fully overcame their physical, cognitive, and emotional impairments. When it became clear how much these youngsters had withered, most of the group homes were shut down.

Another telling result came from the work of child analysts Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham. After arriving in London with her father Sigmund in 1938, Anna Freud helped set up the Hampstead Nurseries. During the war, the Nurseries provided care for infants and children who could not be looked after at home because their parents were working in the war effort, or because a parent had been lost, or because their homes were thought unsafe due to the German bombing blitz. Both Freud and Burlingham were already world-renowned child analysts at the time, and strong believers in the importance of good early relationships. They chose their staff carefully



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dilemma: "The problem was not with our facility.... It was obvious that there was a problem inherent in day care itself, a problem that hung like a dark storm over 'good' and 'bad' day care centers alike. The children were too young to be spending so much time away from their parents. They were like young birds being forced out of the nest and abandoned by their parents before they could fly, their wings undeveloped, unready to carry them out into the world." "We were so distressed by our observations," the Dreskins conclude, "that we closed the center."

The Dreskins may be more sensitive and braver than most day care practitioners, but their experiences are not unusual. A vast body of skeptical testimony on hired child care is available from individuals right inside the profession. Several years ago, after I'd written a number of scholarly articles about day care, *Reader's Digest* reprinted a review of day care research I'd put together. That brought me an outpouring of more than 100 personal letters. The thing that stunned me most in this correspondence was the number of responses critical of day care that I received from current or former day care workers.

A single mother from Spokane, Washington wrote: "I know that the abdication of parents' responsibility to raise their children begins at a very young age in this country. I know that parents abdicate this right even in the first few weeks after birth, during the critical bonding stage for infants. I know this because I am a nanny recruiter. I send nannies to the East Coast states and to Florida. I like my job, mostly because I deal with the really fine people we send, who are truly nurturing people, but I am alarmed by what I see happening at the end of my job placements, in the family itself. I am seriously thinking about altering my profession."

A woman named Cherie Johnson sent a note saying, "I am the Assistant Director of Rainbow Corners Child Care Center in Papillion, Nebraska. This one job I would cheerfully give up if all these kids could stay at home with Mom or Dad. We really try to give them warm personal care but with so many I know most of our full-timers do not get the attention they really need."

Judy Hodges, a college-educated mother of two from Columbus, Ohio, wrote to report that after working in a day care center and keeping children in her home while her own daughters were young, she felt very uncomfortable with the idea of extended separations of young children from their parents. A woman who had worked at the Siemens Corporation day care center in Oslo wrote me from Norway to describe a "survival of the fittest environment" characterized by "fresh talk, aggressive behavior, a feed 'em and get 'em out to play" attitude.

Along these same lines, a different article I wrote on day care for the *Washington Post* produced a response from an intelligent 33-year-old mother of two living in Falls Church, Virginia. "I am a home day care provider," she began.

> I care for a 19-month-old girl, the daughter of close friends of mine, who I've cared for since she was four months old. I normally have her four days a week, 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.... For many months this child cried and held her arms out to me every time her mother came to pick her up. I know her parents very well and feel certain that nothing resembling abuse or neglect was going on. After ruling that out it seemed that the child had made a conscious choice and preferred me to her mother. This has been difficult for both me and my friend.... This baby, unlike a child at home full time with his mother, was

and set up child care practices based on the very latest knowledge of child psychology. Conditions, all in all, were about as good as modern science and social concern could create.

What, then, were the results for their young charges? The truly crippling effects produced by average institutions were mostly eliminated. But in several vital areas children reared under these prime group conditions fared less well than children tended by average families. In speech, for example, the typical Hampstead two-year-old was six-months retarded compared with typical children looked after in their own homes. The Hampstead children were more aggressive and had less control of their impulses. They were late in achieving their toilet training. They were less cooperative. Many became listless.

In an attempt to soften these effects the nursery eventually grouped children into artificial "families," small groups of infants and toddlers with one or two adults serving as the exclusive "parents." "The result of this arrangement was astonishing in its force and immediacy. The need for individual attachment...which had been lying dormant, came out of a rush," wrote Freud and Burlingham. "The violent attachment to the mother substitutes...was anything but peaceful." Eventually, however, there was a positive effect on speech development and on toilet training. Overall, results were better but still far from optimal.

So here we had a model institution, directed by two international experts in child development as their contribution to the nation in a time of emergency. And the outcomes were literally less successful than those produced by a statistically average family with an average baby. This, incidentally, did not come as a surprise to Freud or Burlingham. They had long recognized that professional wisdom, for all its usefulness, could never supplant intimate family ties as the spur to human development. Results like those from the Hampstead Nurseries stand not as criticisms of the techniques of the child development profession but rather as, in psychoanalyst Selma Fraiberg's words, "an appreciation of the family as the point of departure for all sound psychological thinking."

—*KZ*



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given another option and chose not to bond with her mother, to instead bond with me. I think this is an awful situation to put an infant in. To deprive a baby of the close, intense relationship with one caring, loving person, which I believe is critical in infancy, both for the child and the adult, negates the very basis from which emotional security derives.

One of the most compelling letters I've received on this subject came from a former day care worker from Wisconsin named Donna Briesemeister. She wrote as follows:

> I am a public school music teacher, and the mother of two nearly grown sons.... In 1983, when I was between teaching positions, I took a job as a day care worker in Deerfield, Illinois. Baxter Laboratories made us nationally famous, and made history for themselves, by becoming the first corporation in the country to subsidize their employees's use of child care at an approved facility. We were housed in an unused public school building, and had in our care approximately 280 children between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 years. I was assigned to a room for infants, and for nine hours a day I, and three wonderful young women, tried to give "mother's care" to 12 precious souls.
>
> This experience was one of the most poignant of my life, because it was impossible for us even to approach the level of care we believed a child needed.... I watched children being traumatized as workers came and went. I observed the disenchantment they suffered, and the hostility they developed. [Noted psychologist] Burton White even came to visit us, and to speak to us of his belief that children, if they are to grow up healthy and happy, need to be under the care of their own mothers, at least until they are three years of age. I couldn't agree more....
>
> I could go on and on, because I have been haunted these past several years by the images I carry from this "best of all possible" institutional day care centers.... I can tell you that before my year in day care work was over, my co-workers and I were able to convince five of the 12 mothers whose children we cared for that they would be happier, and that their parent-child relationships would be healthier, if they would quit their jobs and would stay at home with their children. Our "babies" are five years old now, and we still stay in touch with their parents. That early bonding—unfortunately between us and the babies, instead of between the babies and their parents—is such a powerful human emotion that it never goes away, no matter how many years pass or how circumstances change. No parent or child should miss out on that experience.

**Fully half of all day care arrangements turn over in the course of a year.**

Though it is obviously very difficult for workers to speak frankly on this charged subject, a great deal of uneasiness of this sort exists on day care's front lines today. There is a strong tendency in the popular press to censor such testimony for fear of "offending" some listeners. Nonetheless, warnings have worked their way into some established media outlets. In a feature article in the politically left magazine *The Progressive*, Dorothy Conniff, head of city day care programs in Madison, Wisconsin, describes day care as "mostly crowd control," and "a troubling social experiment." The *Washington Post* has quoted Jeree Pawl, director of the infant-parent program at the University of California-San Francisco, saying, "in most day cares, it's a pecking order; it's like a bunch of wild chickens in a hen yard." The loudest, most obnoxious behavior is what gets rewarded with attention from overloaded adult caretakers and intimidated peers both, stated Pawl.

The *Wall Street Journal* ran an interview in which the head of an Illinois day care center serving 300 children—250 from families where both parents work, 50 from single-parent families—worried aloud about her mission. An excerpt:

> Demand is so great that Elaine Lombardo, the center's founder and executive director, could sign up many more parents for care ranging up to $120 a week if she wanted to.
>
> She doesn't want to. Mrs. Lombardo has ambivalent feelings about her job. She knows she is providing a valuable and necessary service, but she worries about the family life and future of her charges. Many children are dropped off at 6:15 A.M. and don't see their parents again until 6 at night—even later, sometimes. One parent, a model, left her four-year-old until 8 P.M. It's not unheard of, either, for parents to drop off children who are obviously ill.
>
> Under the circumstances, it's not surprising that the children come to look upon their teachers and Mrs. Lombardo as mother figures. "The kids kiss me good night," she says. "I'm torn. I want them to feel safe and secure, but this is not their home. Parents think we can substitute for family, but we can't."

In one of her books, bestselling child care author Penelope Leach also reports hearing such reservations among day care workers.

> At a recent talk I gave to a group of nursery worker trainees, one girl recounted her worries about the lack of individual attention received by children in her unit. She finished with these words: "I suppose it's true that they are better off with us. We are taught and we do know what we are doing. But when I have children of my own I will use everything I know to look after them myself. I'd die rather than put a child of mine in the place where I work.



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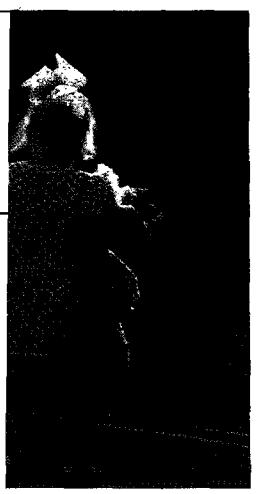
Coming as they do from talented and well-intentioned individuals right within the substitute-care industry itself, statements like these reflect much more than occasional dissatisfactions. They grow out of fundamental problems that exist at the very core of the childrearing-by-proxy experiment. In the sections that follow we'll look at some of those inherent problems.



## MUSICAL CAREGIVERS

Remember Meryl Frank? She of the ten babysitters in two years, whose story started this article? Well, Meryl Frank has lots of company.

The *Washington Post Magazine* ran an admiring profile of a fine day care teacher working in a Maryland Kinder-Care center. In the body of the article, as part of a short description of the teacher's first weeks adjusting to her job, the reporter described how one mother angrily approached the new teacher with the news that "she was the ninth woman to work in her son's room in eight months." The mother demanded to know, "How long are you gonna be here?"

An article from *New York* magazine provides a snapshot of this same, central problem hitting a different part of the socio-economic spectrum. It chronicles the experiences of a "mergers-and-acquisitions specialist at Paine Webber" who went through six nannies in the first six months of her child's life. Nanny Number One was arrogant, while Number Two was overfanatic about housekeeping, and Number Three didn't stimulate the child. Nanny Number Four was great but left abruptly without notice. Number Five was an *au pair* whose inability to speak English led to nutritional problems for the infant, and nanny Number Six was a Haitian who turned out to be paranoid and a baby disliker. Number Seven was doing fine. As of the story's writing, anyway.

In the interview grapevine and the statistical studies alike, caretaker turnover turns out to be a very serious problem for hired day care. A pair of investigations by UCLA psychologist Carollee Howes of 18- to 24-month-olds in good quality home-based day care found that most of the children had already experienced two or three changes in caregivers, and some had had as many as six.

By its very nature, day care produces instability and discontinuities in a baby's life. A child in purchased care, Penelope Leach points out, must regularly rely on "somebody who, even if she was there yesterday because it wasn't her day off, doesn't know what happened to that child in the 12 hours previous." This can have negative effects:

> When a child is growing and changing and developing and working very hard at particular areas of his development, even 12 hours can put you totally out of step. Caring for a baby non-continuously is a constant process of experiment.... It may not hurt the baby for one afternoon, but it's awful bad for babies if all of their infant lives they are having to communicate with people to whom their language is foreign.

Yet this is what day care children are required to do all the time, as Leach notes:

> Split shifts to cover the long nursery day double the number of people with whom babies must interact. Lunch breaks, sick leave, vacations and in-service training courses produce such constant staff movement that case studies suggest an average of seven different people a day and 15 a week (some of them strangers "filling in") handle each child.

This is the *built-in* churning, Leach notes. On top of that you must add all the turnover that occurs whenever there is a change of center or arrangements.

There is widespread agreement among child development experts that instability in caretaking can seriously interfere with a young child's development. Howes' studies showed that the more changes a youngster had experienced, the more trouble he had adjusting to first grade. Other research shows that caregiver departures can cause breakdowns in toilet training and speech skills. Repeated disappointments will cause some youngsters to withdraw from adult contact. Other children will act out their resentment and disappointment by disrupting the classroom.

"The child is thrust into the care of some strange person, disrupting the bonds established with the mother. And just when he sends out some tender, new shoots of affection, he gets a new sitter," explains child psychiatrist Jack Raskin. "The child can't shout, 'My heavens, every attempt I'm making to get the closeness I need is sabotaged. What the hell is being done here?' But you'll see the results, perhaps five years later when he's disruptive in school, or ten years later when he's on drugs."

A baby who "is cared for by many well-meaning strangers in turn, or one who is cared for sketchily and without concentration, sharing his caretaker with other needful small people, is like an adult who moves from country to country, knowing the language of none," writes psychologist Leach. Some youngsters learn not to attach themselves to any caregiver. They lose the ability to feel or express warmth, and develop a shallow and indiscriminate emotional life. Certain such children end up without any sense of personal connectedness, and



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thus lack concern for winning any other person's approval. This leaves them unaccountable, and sometimes socially dangerous.

To understand why shifting parent-surrogates can be so disruptive to a youngster, consider that a child's feelings "acquire the strength and variety of adult love" by the age of two, according to experts. Take this fully-developed capacity to feel the thrills and pangs of love and then overlay it with a child's fundamental uncertainty about the larger world and you can see where the potential for hurt and insecurity comes from. As one mother I know asked when facing her own daughter's separation from her day care provider:

> How do I explain to Susannah that very soon she will leave the woman she has known and loved for three-fourths of her life? That she will be taken away from what has become her second family? That the children who are closer to her than her cousins, whose names were among the first words she learned, will be gone from her world?

Fear of abandonment is a primal human worry. There are fairy tales and ballads and novels aplenty to attest to that. The oldest theme in literature is that people can't simply be interchanged one for another in affairs

## Longstanding Warnings from Experts

"It's very hard to become a sensitively responsive mother if you're away from your child ten hours a day," says distinguished child developmentalist Mary Ainsworth. "It really is." Margaret Mead, the scholar and champion of progressive causes, emphasized the same point. "A little baby needs continuity of care; all our studies suggest that too frequent changes of the mothering person are hard on children. If a woman works full time, it is very difficult for her to provide this continuity." Toward the end of her life, Mead argued explicitly that thoughtful women shouldn't be having children with the idea of placing them in someone else's care all day.

From her experience of recent years, Princeton, N.J. child therapist Isabel Paret concludes that "there's no question that infants don't do well in daycare, no matter how much modern families would like to think they do." Eleanor Galenson, a prominent New York child psychiatrist, states unequivocally that "putting infants into full-time daycare is a dangerous practice. Psychiatrists have been afraid to come out and tell the public this, but many of us certainly believe it to be true." Stanford psychologist Bryna Siegel concurs, noting that "clinician colleagues are reporting an increase in the number of children with unstable, extensive daycare histories in their practices." An article in the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* reports that among "patients with an early history of surrogate mothering," "estrangement from biological mothers, and intolerance of intimate relationships" is a significant problem. Many teachers, physicians, and youth workers likewise report seeing more and more disturbance traceable to early non-parental care.

Lillian Katz, the 1994 president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, describes this decade's findings on daycare effects as "very frightening." "Children under three don't belong in institutions," she states straightforwardly. Samuel Sava, executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, likewise urges that "each child deserves at least three good years at home with a full-time parent."

Penelope Leach, the British psychologist and author of today's most influential childraising manuals, is an opponent of the trans-Atlantic trend toward viewing childraising as a sideline practiced by parents busy at jobs. She insists that newborns need the concentrated attention of their parents for at least their first couple years, and she speaks with passion against group care for children under two. Someone caring for a child out of love will do a far better job than someone doing it for pay, she argues, and it should be a major aim of modern society to make full-time parenting easier.

Another child advocate who refuses to pull his punches on the daycare issue is the prominent pediatrician William Sears. He insists that "when mother and baby are separated, both of them miss out on the full benefits of a continuous mother-infant attachment." A baby in substitute care, he says, is "required to bounce his cues and affections back and forth between various caregivers. His needs may not be consistently met, and his developing sense of trust may be compromised."

The granddaddy of parent counselors, of course, is the recently deceased Benjamin Spock. Dr. Spock had for years opposed infant daycare, arguing that "a day nursery...is no good for an infant. There's nowhere near enough attention or affection to go around." Spock has argued that children need responsive, full-time parental love in their first years, and that it makes no sense for parents to "pay other people to do a poorer job of bringing up their children."

Despite a good deal of backtracking in successive editions of his book to placate feminist criticisms, Spock still pointed out in recent years that "even at six months babies will become seriously depressed, losing their smile, their appetite, their interest in things and people, if the parent who has cared for them disappears.... Small children...may lose some of their capacity to love or trust deeply, as if it's too painful to be disappointed again and again." He adds that "it is stressful to children to have to cope with groups, with strangers, with people outside the family. That has emotional effects, and, if the deprivation of security is at all marked, it will have intellectual effects, too."

For the first three years of his life, Spock argued, a child needs individualized care from the same person. Only in the small number of cases where a childcare arrangement fits



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of the heart. So is it really so hard to understand why children might suffer from being disconnected from the people they love most? And as wrenching as lost loyalty and love are for grown-ups, they are even harder for children—because children are forming their very first attachments and have no other bonds or sense of worth to fall back on.

Though most parents are aware that harm can come from day care instability, it is not at all uncommon for children to be regularly moved to new settings. Census Bureau figures show that about one child out of every five in day care has changed programs within the last four months. Other studies show that fully half of all day care arrangements change over the course of a year.

There are dozens of reasons for rapid day care turnover. The child or parent may have had a bad experience. There may have been a sickness. The child may have gotten too old for a particular group. The location may have turned out to be inconvenient. The cost may have been too high. Someone may have come to dislike someone else. Perhaps the family moved, or changed jobs.

And even when the parent and child stay put, providers very often move out from underneath them. The National Child Care Staffing Study, which examined a sample of 227

that description can it substitute "pretty well" for parental care. He registered his urgent hope that "there will always be men and women who feel that the care of children...is at least as important and soul satisfying as any other activity." And he insisted that no parent should ever "feel the need to apologize for deciding to make that their main career."

Burton White, former director of the Harvard Preschool Project and one of the world's leading authorities on the first three years of life, has also written explicitly on the subject of nonparental care. "After more than 30 years of research on how children develop well, I would not think of putting an infant or toddler of my own into any substitute care program on a full-time basis," he reports, "especially a center-based program." White suggests that except for occasional baby-sitting, parents ought not use substitute care at all during the first six months of a child's life. A newborn "has to be responded to intensely in this period." From six months to three years of age, he says, the parent can use some part-time child-care, but the youngster should spend most of his waking time with a parent or grandparent. White concludes, "Unless you have a very good reason, I urge you not to delegate the primary child-rearing task to anyone else during your child's first three years of life.... Babies form their first human attachment only once. Babies begin to learn language only once.... The outcomes of these processes play a major role in shaping the future of each new child."

After studying hired child care in depth, in both its non-profit and for-profit forms, White pronounces it "a total disaster area," with "no feasible way of turning it into a model industry." Most families will find only "pretty poor substitutes" for parental care when they look outside the home, he warns. Therefore, "government should resist the cries for free full-time substitute baby care for all who want it."

If you are surprised to learn of this consensus against early full-time daycare, there is a good reason: Political fashions have made criticisms of daycare so off-limits that unfavorable evidence has been muted, downplayed, or ignored, in academic circles and mass media both. Michael Meyerhoff, director of the Center for Parent Education, explains that "over 90 percent of the professionals we deal with would agree with our basic position—that full-time substitute care for children under age three is not ordinarily in the best interests of the child. But many of these professionals are involved in situations where it's economically or politically unrealistic to maintain that position. Because of the strong attacks they'd be likely to get, many people are not saying anything."

Penelope Leach warns parents "there is a cover-up going on." The deep need of young children for individual care is seldom stated publicly and unequivocally for "fear of upsetting the parents who don't provide it." This, says Leach, is a serious error on the part of responsible authorities.

> I am sorry for mothers who cannot look after their babies themselves, but I do not believe that it is helpful to conceal from them the fact that group care is a bad alternative. They are entitled to the facts as we understand them.... I am sympathetic, too, with mothers who could provide full-time care themselves but do not wish to. But they too are entitled to a true picture of the conflict between what they want and what their children need.

Rather than dispense information which could ruffle feathers, many pediatricians, psychologists, and other public advice-givers have fallen scandalously silent on this touchy subject. The result is that knowledgeable criticism of daycare is fading from popular view. And fewer and fewer parents are even aware that there exists a large body of research and clinical experience associating serious problems with early daycare.

But if public warnings on this subject have been muffled, the reservations of experts nonetheless remain strong. A 1990 poll of U.S. pediatricians conducted by the Thomas Jefferson School of Medicine in Philadelphia, for example, showed that 77 percent believe infants six months or younger ought to be cared for only at home. A different survey of 1,100 baby doctors carried out that same year by the American Academy of Pediatricians reported that a substantial majority of physicians consider full-time daycare harmful for children under age 4.

—*KZ*



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childcare centers in five regions of the country, reported that fully 41 percent of all caregivers quit their position each year. (Other studies show comparable results.) "To give you an idea of how bad it is," stated the director of the project, "during our study, we had tiny children coming up to our researchers and asking them, 'Are you my teacher?'"

And that's just in centers. Among *home* day care workers, the average turnover is even higher. Nationwide, 62 percent of all in-home workers flip over in the course of a year.

What's more, the situation is getting worse. Surveys show that as the demand for day care and the size of the industry have risen, staff turnover has accelerated sharply over the last decade.

Anyone who does any research on day care today hears repeated stories of nomadism. "While Mrs. Freebing says she's had good luck with the two nannies she's hired, one from Utah and one from Montana, she's in the process of hiring her third nanny in 18 months. The first two are going back to school," reads a typical history. Parents finally find an acceptable childcare provider after a long ordeal, only to lose her. Left for a better position. Got married. Going to school to learn computers. Deported by the immigration service. These are experiences I've come across over and over.

Hardly any family relying on day care is safe from this sudden turmoil, not even those who pay for the costliest forms of care. An interview printed by Fredelle Maynard in her book on day care tells a representative story. Maynard quotes a Canadian mother describing an in-home day care arrangement she is satisfied with:

> They have a routine, the two of them. Victoria comes in the mornings and does toast and eggs for the baby; we leave while she's eating. Then they both watch "Polka Dot Door." Peggy recognizes the music, skips to the living room. After that the baby plays in her room, with the gate hooked, while Victoria cleans. Nap is from 11 to 1, lunch at one. Afternoons they go for a walk, shop, visit friends, watch some more TV (There's probably too much TV, but that's something I have to accept). Sometimes Peggy has a second nap while Victoria makes supper; they eat together, not with us (Victoria's choice). Peggy cries when she leaves.
>
> Everything considered, it's an ideal arrangement. I'm free to concentrate on my job, my child has a mother-substitute who's absolutely conscientious and devoted. Let me tell you I wake every morning and pray she won't leave us. Not that I really worry. The young nannies from Jamaica or the British Isles often don't take their jobs seriously; they meet a man, or get a better job, often, and they're off. For Victoria, stability is a central value. She regards this as her home.

One week after this interview, Victoria left without giving Riva, the mother, any notice. Her immigrant papers had come through. And "in the three months since," Maynard reveals, "Riva (pregnant again) has had one nanny who lasted two weeks and a series of makeshift arrangements. Now she and her husband are sponsoring a nanny from Hong Kong."

**For children, the daily experience is "like enduring a nine-hour cocktail party."**

## LOST IN A GROUP

For all of the problems associated with nannydom, it is still probably the least harmful form of hired caretaking in most cases, because it at least allows lots of one-on-one attention. Relatively few children, however, have their own nanny. And few ever will—because the average parent with average earning potential simply can't afford to hire someone to stand in for them full time.

Professionalized childcare, as Penelope Leach points out, "depends for its viability on economies of scale, because if one professional cares for only one baby then she is a direct swap for the mother." There is no great supply of willing and qualified workers making themselves available for such a swap, and even if there were, this wouldn't "free up" any adults overall. Parents would be released, as Leach puts it, "only by leaving babies with less-skilled, or at least less well paid, adults—an uncomfortably colonialist thought."

In order to be affordable, mainstream day care will always require several children to share a single caretaker. Which brings us to the next inherent flaw that plagues paid childrearing—the problem of lack of individual attention. Fredelle Maynard reminds us that "a mother of twins is hard pressed to give *two* babies all the cuddling they want. What can be



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expected of a caretaker who's in charge of four infants—or six? With the best will in the world, that caretaker will be obliged to give some infants a propped-up bottle, to let others cry while she performs essential tasks."

Consider that the birth of triplets is literally considered an emergency situation which automatically qualifies two parents for caretaking assistance and special social aid. Yet in hired day care, the very *best* institutional situations involve three or four infants assigned to a single caretaker. This is what gets called "high quality care."

In average cases, things are worse yet. The government's National Child Care Survey showed that among centers caring for one-year-olds, the average group size is currently ten, and the child/staff ratio is nearly 7:1. Even this is probably an underestimate, since the survey was based on voluntary responses from day care centers and the worst institutions usually don't cooperate.

For many readers, those dry numbers may seem unexceptional. They give no hint of what it's really like to be responsible for several infants or toddlers at once. I suggest anyone who thinks 7:1, or even 4:1, sounds like a reasonable ratio ought to try it someday with real babies. I can promise that you'll experience chaos and practice neglect. You will be lucky just to keep up with diaper changing. Very little real fostering will take place under such conditions.

Dorothy Conniff, the Wisconsin day care chief, did some calculations back in 1988 of how much time it took to provide an infant with just the barest maintenance. She then translated that into the very best day care settings:

> Consider the amount of physical care and attention a baby needs—20 minutes for feeding every three hours or so, and ten minutes for diapering every two hours or so, and time for the caregiver to wash her hands thoroughly and sanitize the area after changing each baby. In an 8½ hour day, then, a caregiver working under the most stringent regulation—the 4:1 ratio—will have 16 diapers to change and 12 feedings to give.
>
> Four diaper-changes and three feedings apiece is not an inordinate amount of care over a long day from the baby's point of view.
>
> But think about the caregiver's day: Four hours to feed the babies, two hours and 40 minutes to change them. If you allow an extra two-and-a-half minutes at each changing to put them down, clean up the area, and thoroughly wash your hands...that makes seven hours and 20 minutes of the day spent just on physical care—if you're lucky and the infants stay conveniently on schedule.
>
> Since feeding and diaper-changing are necessarily one-on-one activities, each infant is bound to be largely unattended during the five-plus hours that the other three babies are being attended to. So if there's to be any stimulation at all for the child, the caregiver had better chat and play up a storm while she's feeding and changing.

While older preschoolers in day care require somewhat less maintenance, they

## Day Care and Big Brother

By virtue of its privacy, the family is the primary shelter of human variety. In the very process of preparing its newborn for the world the family can...see to it that the world's standards do not impinge too closely upon the defenseless young and so do not mold them too precisely to the world's imperious demands.... In this lies the human potentiality for freedom." So writes author Walter Karp, one of many observers (from various parts of the political spectrum) troubled by the standardizing effects of mass day care.

The contrast between a family upbringing and "collective professionalized care of the young" is stark, Karp notes. "Instead of protecting the young from the world, such administrative child care would fasten the world's ways on the newborn with a strangler's grip." And "in a society where cash is too often the link between people," daycare makes "the child's primary experience of life the experience of being someone's job."

When the infant-mother-father relationship is changed, the very institution that forms human personality is altered. Eventually, society itself may be reoriented. Some years ago, a Smithsonian Institution project attempted to determine the early childhood sources of human creativity and leadership, and eventually concluded that a consistently close parental connection was the most critical factor. Two other important influences were minimizing the time a child spent with peers, and providing opportunities for free exploration of the world under parental encouragement. None of these conditions, chief investigator Harold McCurdy pointed out, are advanced by group socialization.

Sociologist David Popenoe asserts that "childrearing is one of those aspects of human society that is not subject to improvement through modern techniques of efficiency and rationalization." It is, he says, a "cottage industry." What is required—an abundance of time, patience, and love on the part of caring parents—"has no substitute in the technological realm."

Despite claiming to serve and speak on behalf of the family, the hired child care industry "actually weakens its authority at every point," suggests left-wing critic Christopher Lasch. Author George Gilder sees the professionalization of childrearing as a tragic extension of earlier errors in American public policy. "The same people who paved the road to hell in America's inner cities," he says, now "want to take care of your small children."

New York State teacher of the year John Taylor Gatto warns that any standardized process which has children as its product will eventually yield bitter results. "Lives can be controlled by machine education, but they will always fight back with weapons of social pathology—drugs, violence, self-destruction, indifference." These, he says, are already "symptoms I see in the children I teach."

—*KZ*



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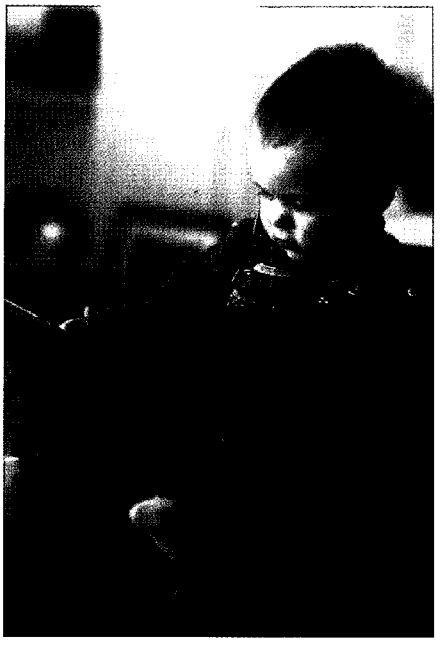
also get crowded into larger groups—typically from eight to 15 youngsters per adult. This also results in inadequate care. The average toddler makes 10 overtures an hour to his primary caretaker, according to studies. A day care worker responsible for 10 toddlers would thus be faced with an overture every 35 seconds. Obviously most will be ignored or bluntly cut off. The assistance, praise, rule-teaching, discipline, and reinforcement that one- to three-years-olds need will often be unavailable.

The problem is not that day care workers are thoughtless, but rather that they work within a structure where fine-tuning and sensitivity are simply not possible. I have helped mind eight preschoolers many times in morning cooperative playschools, and I know that all you can usually aim for is to keep basic order, to avoid accidents, to survive. The life's lessons come few and far between in such settings. If children are gathered in such groups a couple times a week for two or three hours of play, this is not a serious problem. But when such a group becomes the child's primary residence all day long, not even the most conscientious caretaker can rescue the situation. The plain result is neglect.

Many observers say all that's needed is some new laws requiring higher adult-to-child ratios. But they overlook day care's basic nature. Getting the ratios up to a humane level would amount to recreating families artificially, and the reason day care exists to begin with is because there aren't enough adults currently willing to spend their days in families. Even if you *could* provide enough adult bodies in every day care setting, you would, as Penelope Leach points out, "have lost your economies of scale." Only a comparatively small number of rich families can afford to hire one parent surrogate for every child or two. In any mass form of day care, basic financial considerations and the limited number of substitute parents available make the kind of personal attention children crave impossible.

Childrearing of adequate quality is inherently resistant to streamlining. "Raising several children is a project that exacts a constant alertness and attention," comments writer George Gilder, something social engineers "don't remotely understand when they urge that 'society' do it." Pediatrician Herbert Ratner worries that "nature goes out of its way to give each baby a private tutor. We go out of our way to develop a litter situation." Substitution of group care for parent care is both unnatural and impractical, he argues, and it will eventually be regretted.



## CHILDREN OF INSTITUTIONS

In recent years there has been a big shift toward institutional child care. If the Clintons have their way, even more of the future growth will be at institutions. Making institutionalization a common part of early childhood will have effects on American personality. As Deborah Fallows points out,

> Life for a child in a day care center, good or bad, is different in certain ways from other kinds of life. There is more rigidity to it. The sheer number of children that day care centers handle necessarily means organization, scheduling, and rules.... Life in day care centers is also more homogeneous than life elsewhere. The day's format is always the same. Most of the time is spent in the same building or room, on the same playground....The need to manage large numbers of young children...accounts for the centers' emphasis on standardization and routine.

"Anyone who has spent time in a day care center knows that it is not a place where children can 'do their own thing,'" add Bill and Wendy Dreskin.

> Every aspect of the day is regulated. They must lie on the mats, whether tired of not, for the prescribed number of minutes. If they are tired, they must still wake up at the end of rest time.... They must eat by the clock, even if they are hungry earlier, and there is no allowance for individual taste.... In some infant centers, babies are "color coded." The "green" baby has the green pacifier, the green bottle, the green crib, and so on. The uniqueness of each little human person is lost....
>
> While "better" quality centers avoid horrors like walking toddlers in groups on leashes and putting infants in stacking kennel-like cribs, day care centers, like hospitals, asylums, and the military, are...a total institution.... Children quickly get the message that they must go along with the group and not make waves.

The Dreskins evoke hospitals and barracks. I suggest an even closer analogy for the typical day care atmosphere might be a nursing home. There is often the same well-intended but ultimately depressing air. As one mother described full-day centers, "you go in there, and all these children are clutching their little possessions, and they're looking around. They don't have any concept of time, so when a door opens, they all look up, and when they see you're not their mother, they look back."

Day care centers even tend to have a uniform emotional environment. This is Fallows' characterization:



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**Regimentation pops up wherever custodial care of children is substituted for family care.**

> The children live in an "on" atmosphere that differs from the tone of life at home. Even when caregivers are most gentle and children most mild-mannered, the pressure of numbers generates considerable noise, confusion, interruptions. Children have to respond, to react, to engage the social side of their personalities almost all day long. Time alone, to be quiet, to muse, to just be there, is minimal.

Almost all day care observers eventually comment on the constant hubbub. "I couldn't stand the noise. From sun-up to sun-down, voices talking, talking," writes Anne Husted Burleigh. "People," she argues, "were not made for babble." "For ten hours a day, these kids have to interact with about 20 or 30 kids," says day care worker Katie Humes. "Imagine if we adults had to constantly be trying to get along with that many people." For lots of children, suggested author Vance Packard after making a series of day care visits, the daily experience "must be like enduring a nine-hour cocktail party."

Perhaps the most undesirable aspect of the day care center is that, as child psychologist Arnold Samuels puts it, "the child must comply with the environment; the program doesn't always respond to the child." Dorothy Conniff characterizes this as "the most consistent drawback of day care centers."

> Staff resort to forcing children into the same boring activity all at the same time to maintain control. Whatever children can learn from pasting a picture of a pumpkin on a pumpkin outline is not enhanced the next day by pasting a paper feather on a turkey. This kind of solution to the problem of what to do with young children is a terrible waste....[a] kind of repressive control.

Given the impossibility of true personal attention, the need to mark time, and the necessity of keeping control, even the most mundane activities on the day care schedule take on large significance. Fallows describes the discomfort she observed during hand-washing periods as lines of children had to wait for those in front of them to one at a time walk to the sink, wet their hands, grasp the soap, wash, replace the soap, rinse, pull out a towel, dry, throw the towel away, and then return to their seat—all with the deliberate, painful slowness of a toddler. In the course of a nine-hour day, mass coat-donning, bathroom-using, grace-saying, line-forming and so forth can become trials in depersonalization for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

For her book *The Erosion of Childhood*, Valerie Suransky observed several widely different day care settings and came away struck by the way each stressed time scheduling and the routinization of tasks. Suransky also noted the importance of *containment* in day care, and the role of locked doors, marching in line, and other measures used toward this end.

Regimentation pops up wherever custodial care of children is substituted for family care—even when the children involved are much older and more competent than infants and toddlers. When *Time* profiled some typical days of American children a few years ago, a third grader named Katie, the only child of a Seattle doctor and nurse practitioner, was included. "Katie is a day care child," began the profile. "To her generation of children, day care is as familiar a destination as Disneyland, if not nearly as magical." Katie still goes to day care before and after every school day. Until her teenaged half-sister recently moved into the house, Katie also "used to go to day care all summer. I didn't look forward to summer then."

Behold a picture of upper-income early childhood at the end of the twentieth century:

> Katie spends ten hours away from home each day. After rising at 7 a.m. and downing a breakfast of Lucky Charms, she buckles herself into the front seat of her mother's Volkswagen Jetta for the two-minute ride [to] Montlake Elementary School. She stays for an hour in a kindergarten classroom where the Community Day School sets up shop each day before and after school. At 9 A.M. she joins her third-grade classmates at Montlake. When the school day finishes, Katie circles back to day care, where she stays until 6 P.M.
>
> Katie clearly does not like day care. "A lot of times it gets really boring just going there," she says. "It's the same setting and usually the same things to do." ...She cannot invite friends over to her house, nor can she go to theirs. Worst of all, she cannot disappear by herself into her bedroom and play with her toys or work on her next book. "I would love if I could just stay in the attic," she says. "There's a little room in my mom and dad's closet. There's this little door to get in. It is really fun in there. They have all these old literature books and poetry books and drawing books. It is like a big library, and I could just sit there and read all day."
>
> Sometimes when she's feeling unhappy at day care, Katie starts to imagine that the other children do not like her. She suffers from attacks of what she calls "aloneness," a feeling she rarely has when she is at home alone....
>
> No matter how creative the entertainment, the children find it hard to keep going, going, going as they head into the final stretch late each afternoon.... Toward the end of the day, the slightest twist on the doorknob is enough to get a sea of tired eyes to look up. As parents arrive to pick up their kids, Katie quickly looks up to see if it is her mom or dad. Most kids have a pretty good feeling for what time their



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parents normally appear, so when a parent is late, a child becomes anxious.

Institutionalization of this sort means several things for children, comments family researcher David Cayley. "It means separation from the day-to-day world of home and neighborhood, it means the loss of the opportunity to do what you want when you want to do it, including sometimes just doing nothing at all. And it means the loss of privacy and solitude."

This is not an exclusively American problem. All industrial societies are pushing their children in the same direction. The *Christian Science Monitor* carried an interview with an educated Parisian couple who discussed family practices and childcare policies in France (which Mrs. Clinton and other liberals in the U.S. often laud). "I've never wanted to put children into these public systems," confessed Alexandra Doualle. "You can say what you want, but day care centers are collective institutions. The children are raised as a collective entity. The child will develop his collective self but will not necessarily develop his individual self." What happens, she asks, to a particularly sensitive child? To one who is easily influenced? To one who can be dominated? They suffer. "A little day care, a few hours a day, that's fine," suggests Mrs. Doualle. But spending more time than that in a group can damage a child's personality.

One of the great cultural ironies of our era, Bill and Wendy Dreskin have argued, is that this trend toward institutionalization in childhood is being driven primarily by social liberals—the great professed opponents of dehumanizing standardization.

> Progressives are dedicated to increasing the number of children who must lead these regimented lives. They are lobbying for the public schools to include day care programs for preschool children or even infants and toddlers, and in some states they are working toward lowering the age for compulsory entrance into the school system.... Progressives push for year-round schools which would shift the responsibility of summer care from parents to the government.

**Infants under one in group care have eight times as many colds and other infections.**

The institutions produced by all this social activism have been characterized as "part-time orphanages" by worried skeptics. And like the full-time versions, they can wrench their charges poignantly. Writer Harry Stein illustrates this through the experiences of a friend. While wrestling with the decision of whether to have children, the friend—a successful broadcasting executive—decided to visit the best day care center in her neighborhood and draw some conclusions for herself. She came back with serious reservations. "I was quite taken aback when I saw them consoling a six-month-old with a *photograph* of his parents," the woman reported. "I don't know," she observed after a pause, "those people are betting a helluva lot on this experiment panning out."

This snippet from one of Deborah Fallows' center visits provides another glimpse of the impersonality that prevails in so much hired childcare.

> The story line of the book was getting more complicated when the phone rang next door in the director's office. The teacher got up to answer it because the director was out. When she came back, Jason started complaining that he didn't feel well. She let the comment pass and went back to reading when the phone rang a second time. She went again to answer it. When she returned, [Jason] stumbled out of his seat and toward the bathroom, spitting up on me and a few children as he passed.... The teacher went off to clean up Jason, laid him down in the director's office, and tried unsuccessfully to call his mother. She pulled out coloring books and crayons to keep the children busy in her absence.... All but two of the children located their coloring books by their names on the covers. Andrew, the two-and-a-half-year-old, and Michele, a recently arrived five-year-old, didn't have books. They found some left over from children who were no longer at the center and started using them. Suddenly Andrea discovered that she in fact had the wrong book and little Andrew was scribbling in hers. She attempted a quick switch, which set Andrew off howling. When the teacher returned, Michele was pouting and complaining about not having her own book. The teacher, impatient by then, picked up the book Michele was using, scratched out the name "Carolyn" and wrote "Michele" over it. "Carolyn withdrew from school," she explained to me. But Michele did not look convinced.

One leading edge in day care today is special centers that only accept sick children. All around the country, institutions with cutesy names like Sneezles and Chicken Soup and Teddy Bearacks have sprung up, solely as places to park youngsters too ill to attend their regular centers. But there is nothing cute, or healthy, about this practice. When a youngster who is already feeling bad goes to an ill child center he is faced with a totally unfamiliar environment, where all the adults and all the other children are strangers. Instead of bringing extra security and comfort, his illness thus brings him extra strangeness and uncertainty. Penelope Leach puts it bluntly: "To put a sick baby into a stranger's hands is cruelty."

In many cases, it is employers who set up these centers. They then parade them as proof that the company is "family friendly." One cover story in *Fortune* chortled that "for sheer cost-



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effectiveness, nothing beats a facility for children too sick to go to school or day care centers. About 80 employers, up 50 percent from a year ago, have made some provision so that the mommies and daddies of sufferers can still report for work."

Susan Wolfe, director of one Minneapolis ill-child center, does the math for *Fortune*. When a middle manager at First Bank, one of her supporting employers, misses a day of work to minister to a miserable child, it costs the company $154, Wolfe reports. If, on the other hand, the employee checks the child into her center at company expense, it costs the bank only about $20. Voila! An institution that "saves the company 87 percent, or almost $135 a day."

The growing regimentation of childhood involves more than just day care institutions. It includes things like more and more young children having to brave rush hour each day. I have before me an Associated Press piece entitled "The Littlest Commuter" that is typical of several I've seen. It profiles a mother and toddler who spend four hours a day traveling from suburban New Jersey to work and day care, respectively, in lower Manhattan.

This is Ashley's day: She gets up very early and is driven by her mother from Oakland, N.J. to the train station in Ramsey. They park. They board the 6:22 A.M. local to Hoboken. In Hoboken they jump a Trans-Hudson subway. From the top of the subway stairs they stroller several blocks to Ashley's day care center. She stays there all day, then reverses her commute. All told, Ashley's "workday" is 12 hours long.

Welcome to the baby rat race, Ashley.

## HEALTH RISKS

Doctors warn that day care centers have become troublesome sources of health problems. The American Pediatric Association reckons that infants under one in group care have eight times as many colds and other infections as babies cared for by their families. A baby's immune system is not well developed until about his third month of life, and it does not reach adult-level disease-fighting capability until around age two. Take this fact, plus the research finding that an average toddler puts a hand or object in his mouth every three minutes, and you can see why concentrating together groups of these drooling, toy-sucking, low-immune children creates an ideal environment for disease transmission.

Add to this the reality of diapers and you have a recipe for recurring sickness. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control warn that "diaper changing is the highest risk procedure" associated with day care. Even in the highest-quality center with a 1:4 adult-to-child ratio, a worker taking care of babies will have to clean an average of 16 bottoms every day, supposedly sanitizing the changing area thoroughly each time. Dorothy Conniff comments that if you "think about thoroughly washing your hands 16 times a day, you may begin to understand why epidemics of diarrhea and related diseases regularly sweep through infant-care centers."

A Memphis State University study of 800 children under age three found that compared to youngsters at home, children in day care centers suffered half-again as many infections and four-and-a-half-times as many hospitalizations. The *American Journal of Public Health* has reported that children in day care centers incur overall medical expenses that are two to three times as high as those of children cared for at home. This research showed them to be nearly three times as likely to require hospitalization. A RAND Corporation study which analyzed data on 3,841 children age six months to five years showed that attending a day care center "increases bed days for young children by 30 percent," while youngsters attending home-based day care have 19 percent more bed days (both compared to parent-reared children).

In the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, physician Stanley Schuman reports that day care transmission is responsible for recent "outbreaks of enteric illness—diarrhea, dysentery, giardiasis, and epidemic jaundice—reminiscent of the pre-sanitation days of the seventeenth century." Other serious day care hazards include cytomegalovirus, shigellosis, hepatitis, HiB, and ear infections. When we checked my son into Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C., to have a minor hernia repaired when he was young, I was struck to note that half of the children in the surgical ward were in for inner ear surgery, most to have mechanical drains installed to try to prevent eardrum ruptures. Increased day care transmission of disease is the major reason this has become a big problem among children today.

Committees of the the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended in the 1980s that to avoid chronic infections and childhood epidemics, children under two should be cared for only in the company of their siblings if at all possible. When that is impossible, the doctors urge that a small group of no more than six



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children, from no more than three families be used. Large groupings and groups with turnover among the children ought to be avoided when children are young, they suggest. This, obviously, would exclude most day care centers.

And there are public health issues associated with day care beyond just those of disease transmission. Phyllis Weikart, a University of Michigan professor of physical education, has implicated increased day care use in the sharp decline over the last generation in the physical motor skills of children. Today's children have fewer opportunities for unrestricted outdoor movement and play, she explained. And youngsters are considerably less likely to learn physical skills and games from older siblings, playmates, and role models than they once were. Day care creates single-age ghettos where there is less transmission of skills and information of all sorts across age boundaries.

## CAN GOVERNMENT MAKE DAY CARE GOOD?

Now a brief word about day-care "quality." In the national research (including the latest NICHD study that activists misrepresent as exonerating day care), two facts are clear. The first is that when you get right down to actual effects on individual children, the differences between "good" programs and "poor" programs are not large.

The second reality is that in even the very *best* full-time day care situations, large numbers of children (often a majority, depending on what is being measured) end up showing some sign of maladjustment. Problems occur not just where the care is of low quality but also among children in the most careful and expensive forms of hired care—one-on-one nannies, and university lab schools, for instance. This is quite clear in the research, and the best way to summarize it may be to say that excellent day care gets less disappointing results than crummy daycare.

Certainly not all children who go into day care will end up with weak parental bonds, aggressive tendencies, academic problems, personal insecurities, difficulties in peer relations, or other evidence of emotional or cognitive damage. Lots will bounce through with few obvious effects. Individual circumstances like a youngster's temperament, sex, and the status of his home influence how he fares. Older children are better equipped to adapt than infants and toddlers. Part-time care is much less risky than full-time.

## A Final Test of Surrogate Parenting:

If you think the lucky few families able to afford gold-standard day care—a private nanny in one's own home—can thereby avoid day care's problems, think again.

From the later-1800s until the 1930s, placing one's children in the hands of a hired nanny was one of the hallmarks of upper-class existence in Britain and a few other European countries. This was gold-standard care if it ever existed. The nannies were with their children nearly round the clock, typically living right in the children's rooms, and giving their whole life to their charges.

Nonetheless, these arrangements caused much human unhappiness. Among other problems, Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy notes in his book *The Unnatural History of the Nanny*, "the annals of nanny literature are filled with desperate descriptions of incomprehensible and brutal partings" when caretakers left their host families. And even where the connections between nanny and child were never severed, nanny life often brought suffering. Many writers suggest this peculiar institution left deep, raw marks on the entire British upper class.

One famous graduate of a nanny upbringing was Winston Churchill. "If it worked for Churchill, it can't be so bad for others," intone defenders of nannying. And in truth, Churchill's early rearing did have a lot to do with making him the great public man he was. But that rearing also left him privately tormented, and desperately unhappy at the end of his life. Churchill's case is interesting because it illustrates the remarkable closeness of the very best nanny-child relationships while simultaneously demonstrating that, even under optimal conditions, parental surrogacy is ultimately inadequate.

Churchill's father, Lord Randolph, was an ambitious and preoccupied politician, and his mother, Jennie Jerome, was a beautiful young woman caught up in the whirl of fashionable society. Winston's childhood letters show him pleading with his parents for attention.

Rescuing Churchill from this sore neglect was his nanny Mrs. Everest. For the first eight years of his life, Churchill was virtually never separated from Nanny Everest. He slept in her room, had every need attended to by her, and soaked up her calm, loving warmth. From birth until his twentieth year, when she died, Mrs. Everest was "the principal confidante of his joys, his troubles, and his hopes," according to Churchill's son.

She in turn adored Churchill. The depth of their mutual love shines forth in their correspondence. Some samples from her letters found among Churchill's papers when he died (having then been saved by him for more than 70 years):

> Winny dear, do try to keep the new suit expressly for visiting, the brown one will do for everyday wear, please do this to please me.
>
> Thank you so much dearest for getting me a present.... It is very kind of you but you know my Lamb I would rather you did not spend your money on me.
>
> My darling Precious Boy: I hope you will take care of yourself, my darling. I hear of your exploits at steeplechasing. I do so dread to hear of it. Remember Count Kinsky broke his nose once at that....

Churchill was at Everest's deathbed when she succumbed to peritonitis at her sister's house in North London. He describes the day in *My Early Life*.



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It's a mistake, though, to assume that a child with nice concerned parents and a nice middle-class daycare arrangement will be immune from harm. What we've learned over the last decade or so is that all youngsters are vulnerable. Lasting effects will show up among some considerable portion of the youngsters who experience extensive out-of-home care in their first three years. Exactly how large a portion we can't say; long-term results aren't in, and in any case many of these effects will never be fully measurable.

But the ominous findings that have piled up so far give us clear reason to hesitate in our headlong plunge toward more and more childraising by hire.

Day care advocates often claim that the kinds of problems I've been discussing in this chapter can be eliminated via more licensing and regulation. The trouble is, there are already lots of fully regulated—and fully disappointing—day care homes and centers out there. That's because most of the things that really matter to young children, if we're honest about it, simply can't be covered by regulations.

Linda Burton admits she "never found an accurate way to evaluate the merit of a day care situation. Despite my most painstaking investigations, many environments that appeared loving and constructive on initial (and sometimes repeated) examination, turned out later to be something quite different." Anyone who would have the state "guarantee good childcare" must explain how regulators can make these judgments that even cautious parents find so elusive.

Since the things that are really wanted in a childcare provider are almost impossible to stipulate through rules, state regulations generally dwell uselessly, or obsessively on the material inputs that are easiest to measure. What good is the government regulation that reads (literally): "Infants and toddlers should be offered water at intervals"? What about "Infants shall not remain in cribs, baby beds or playpens all day"? It may or may not be useful to insist that every room in which day care is conducted have an 8-foot ceiling, and that there are covers on all the diaper pails. But none of those things have much to do with producing humane childhoods.

A 1991 RAND study of child care quality published in the *Journal of Social Issues* concludes that "the structural elements that are currently the focus of [child care] licensing are, in fact, largely irrelevant in terms of what parents demand." The same conclusion is spelled out in more popular language in the 1990 report *Mothers Speak Out on Child Care*. "Mothers do not believe that loving care can be created by legislative mandate, or bought with generous salaries and top-of-the-line

## The Nanny

She knew she was in danger, but her only anxiety was for me. There had been a heavy shower of rain. My jacket was wet. When she felt it with her hands she was greatly alarmed for fear I should catch cold. The jacket had to be taken off and thoroughly dried before she was calm again. Her only desire was to see my brother Jack, and this unhappily could not be arranged. I set out for London to get a good specialist.... I returned to her bedside. She still knew me, but she gradually became unconscious. Death came very easily to her. She had lived such an innocent and loving life...she had no fears at all.... She had been my dearest and most intimate friend during the whole of the 20 years I had lived.

Churchill enjoyed, as one writer put it, "the total love and undiluted attention of this good woman concentrated entirely on his well-being." He was cared for with intense devotion—far more than most substitute-parented children will ever know—and this gave him an unshakeable base of self-assurance.

Yet Churchill was haunted, in spite of everything he got from Mrs. Everest, by the absence of his mother and his father. His parents were in no way hostile—"My mother shone for me like the Evening Star," Winston wrote in later life—his problem was simply that they were not around much.

The anxiety this ingrained into Churchill wasn't always debilitating. Indeed, Oxford University psychiatrist Anthony Storr argues that the parental indifference of his youth may actually have helped prepare Churchill for his inspired wartime leadership of Britain. The boy's early emotional pain crystallized as an extraordinary pugnacity, and in the midst of a national life-and-death struggle, this rage found a complete and legitimate outlet. The prime minister's famous cry that "We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight...in the air, we shall...fight on the beaches" exemplifies the survivor's spirit that stood him and his nation so well in the heat of battle. The fact that Churchill had been repeatedly forced to master his own despair left him perfectly suited to rouse the nation when all the odds seemed against it, Storr suggests.

But the boy's upbringing eventually came back to bite him. A child who is rejected will lack "belief that the world is predominantly a happy place, and that he has a favored place in it," says Storr.

> Although such a child may experience periods of both success and happiness, these will neither convince him that he is lovable, nor finally prove to him that life is worthwhile.... No amount of external success can ultimately compensate him for this.

That, alas, is precisely the circumstance Winston Churchill found himself in. All through his life he was plagued with moods of deep depression—he referred to them famously as his "Black Dog." These he combatted with activity, and during the periods he was holding political office he mostly kept them in control. But in the end, the "Black Dog" conquered the great man. In his last years, Churchill would sit glumly for days and weeks, convinced of his failure and the uselessness of his life. Despite his magnificent achievements, he ultimately died unhappy.

Separation from mother and father was something not even the generous love of Nanny Everest could save him from. —*KZ*



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play equipment," it reads. "When they demand 'quality care' they are not referring to adequate fire exits and teacher-to-child ratio."

And there is another problem with proposed regulatory fixes for day care: More rules lead to higher expenses and fewer providers. William Gormley observes in a 1990 Brookings Institution study that because regulation will "decrease the supply and raise the costs" of care, it can "ironically, result in fewer regulated facilities." And what good is "better" care if it's unaffordable or unavailable?

I've known several cases where warmhearted people stopped providing care for neighbors because the paperwork became such a burden, because the windows in their playroom weren't as large as the specifications dictated, or for similar reasons. In a strictly regulated environment, the advantage goes to cookie-cutter chains and other mass providers.

A few years ago, Maryland working mother Judy Kaplan Warner wrote me to describe how day care regulations can have perverse effects in this way. She included an article she had written for the *Washington Post* after her daughter's "grandmotherly" home day care provider was raided by a county inspector because she wasn't licensed. In it, Warner complained that "in the name of protecting children, the state law has thrown me back into the pool of anguished parents searching for good day care, while a superbly competent day care provider is forbidden to care for children."

Warner argues that she and thousands of other parents who freely choose informal unlicensed care arrangements "believe we know better than anyone else—the state, the county, the federal government—what our children need to thrive." And surely she is right. Only parents can judge what qualities are essential for their sons and daughters. The effect of most government norms dictated in the name of "quality control" will simply be to drive informal caregivers out of business.

Day care proponents have an almost blind faith in the ability of government to solve child care problems. One favorite tactic of American liberals is to point to Europe—where they claim that excellent day care systems flourish because public will and public money have been applied. The truth, however, as I discovered when I did research in several European countries in the mid-1980s, is rather different.

To begin, most of the European systems are not really day care structures but rather parts of a much larger apparatus of family allowances and tax breaks set up to encourage births and population growth in countries rapidly growing gray. The United States doesn't have a problem with too few births, and thus is not about to copy these programs. Particularly since these European "Family Policies" are incredibly costly—setting up a U.S. equivalent to the French system, for instance, would cost around $300 billion.

More to the point, European child care systems don't do what American promoters claim they do. In Europe, most day care is not excellent, it is mediocre—just as day care is everywhere when practiced on a mass scale. More national effort and funding has been expended in France than anywhere else, and the average center for three-year-olds has one teacher and one half-time aide for every 22 children. Even if every teacher was unusually gifted, this would amount to mere custodialism. Three-year-olds are simply not built for herding in flocks.

Belgium has a free government-run nursery school system for children aged three and over that is very similar to France's. It also has a network, like other European countries, for providing referrals and public subsidies to day care centers that cater to younger children. A typical Belgian center will be staffed by aides with the equivalent of a vocational high school diploma, and the average worker earns about $900 a month. The major source of day care workers is unemployed persons on the government dole, who are assigned to centers by state welfare agencies. On a normal day, a third of the teachers may be absent. "You understand the difference between theory and practice," explains the director of one Brussels child care center, acknowledging that morale among the country's hired caretakers is low.

The really striking thing about European young-child care is not the quantity or quality of publicly-funded centers, but rather *the clear preference of parents to take care of their own infants and toddlers at home.* In the European Union as a whole, fewer than half of all mothers with children under 10 are currently employed. In the United States, half-again as many mothers of children in that age range are absent from the home. Fully seven out of ten infants and toddlers are raised in their own home in France. Even in Sweden, where tax rules and heavy social pressures make it extremely difficult for families to survive without two incomes, four out of every ten children age six or younger are cared for by a parent at home, and another two out of ten are looked after by a relative or neighbor. And if the Swedish public had its druthers there might be even less day care. A 1988 poll showed that 83 percent of all Swedes feel children should stay at home until age three.

Even when European children do end up in non-parental care, public institutions are a distinct second choice. Of the Swedish children in subsidized day care, for instance, fully 40 percent are taken care of in family homes rather than centers. Even more popular among European parents are related caretakers. According to European Union figures, European children with employed mothers are more than twice as likely to be looked after by their grandmothers, for example, than are American children.

The common claim that Europe is carpeted with day care institutions that are consistently wonderful and highly popular is simply not true. Europeans strongly prefer parental and family care to the alternatives. Most still provide such care to their own children. And the institutional care funded by the European governments tends to be mediocre and impersonal just like institutional care everywhere else.

There is no easy way, public or private, to buy for individual children the kind of loving concern that has never been for sale.



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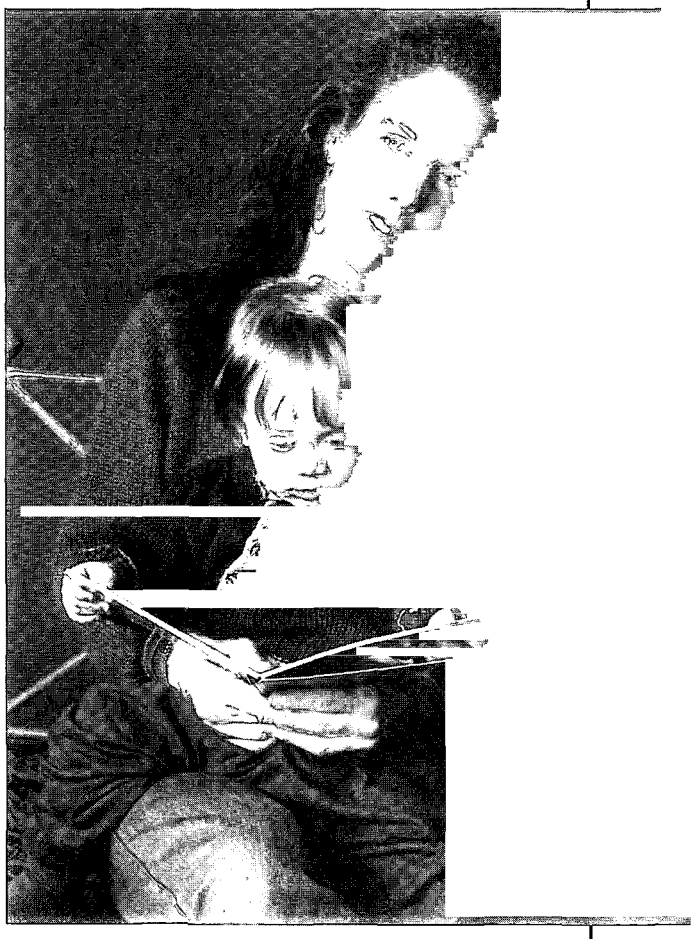
# discovering motherhood

I represent the generation of women who came of age ignited by Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan. These angry and articulate matriarchs taught us that our power and identity should come from the world, and not solely from our husbands or our children or our homes. When I was a college student at Stanford in the 1970s, the sight of my own stay-at-home mother wearing her red-checked dish towel slung over one shoulder used to rile me as a symbol of the oppression of wives stuck in their kitchens.

Determined to create a life far beyond the shackles of housewivery, I became a journalist who interviewed celebrities for United Press International, people like Yoko Ono, Billy Graham, Senator Ted Kennedy, and Queen Noor of Jordan.

Then came marriage, the birth of four sons in rapid succession, and a departure from daily journalism to raise children and become a free-lance writer at home. Ironically, when I now wear a red-checked dish towel over my shoulder as my mother did, I don't feel oppressed; I feel happy and free. After years of racewalking past the moment to reach somewhere higher and better in my career, I am relieved to have slowed down and be in a kitchen with kids. This me called Mommy feels like who I was meant to be all along.



The author with one of her sons.

Photo: Mary Noble Ours

BY IRIS KRASNOW



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In November of 1993, I gave birth to twins and became the mother of four sons under the age of three. That cataclysmic event, which shook up my career and my concept of self, eventually led me to great clarity on what really matters. It comes down to this: family is, quite simply, everything. And the building of a solid family takes a lot of time.

Being a good journalist requires intense energy and devotion; being a good mother takes at least the same commitment, if not more. To succeed, I knew that I would have to work harder than I'd ever worked on anything in my life. And that meant whittling down my herculean To Do list—childrearing is not something you can do in between deadlines and meetings.

Ultimately, our greatest power as human beings is how we spend our time. And I know now that I never again want to spend more time in an office with strangers than I do in my home with my family, the people I love the most. I know that I never want to turn into that friend of mine who drove her 18-year-old off to college and sobbed the whole way home because she realized that during all those weeks and months and years while she had been tied up at the office, early in the morning and late at night, her baby had been turning into a young woman who was now gone. "Where did all the time go?" she lamented. "And now I can't get it back." No, we can't get it back. This day comes but once.

That's why I savor moments like the magical afternoon my toddler son Jack found a Lillian Vernon catalogue and began flipping excitedly through the pages, pointing to item after item. "What's this, Mommy? What's this, Mommy?" he asked over and over, pointing to pottery, windsocks, candles, building blocks. I thought about how Jack will only be tiny enough to tuck into his mother's lap for a short spell longer. I was reminded of his innocence, and that soon, too soon, I would have to let this boy free into a world that could harm him, make him cynical, perhaps even make him bad. I let my magazine drop to my feet and buried my face in Jack's hot, chubby neck.

**When I was a college student, the sight of my stay-at-home mother wearing her red-checked dish towel over one shoulder used to rile me.**

I can't stop little boys with silky cheeks who cling to their mother like monkeys from changing into reticent adolescents with stubble and body pierces. I can't stop four brothers who now loop limbs on the floor as if they were one creature from venturing off some day in four different directions. In an eye blink, our sons won't need me to wrap them in their tattered yellow blankets and sing them to sleep. So right here and right now I thank God for this moment of this day.

When I became the mother of a puppy pack of boys I discovered that all those long debates among ambitious women about ways to balance our lives are fruitless. The task is insurmountable—with small children there can be no balance; they get the most of you, time and time again. When I surrendered to that fact, then real balance came—having my soul and heart and mind in sync.

This doesn't mean I think mothers should be home all the time. I am not home all the time. Our youngest children are now in preschool; so with more time on my hands, I teach a journalism seminar at American University. I love staying involved in the field I've been in since graduating from college two decades ago. But teaching journalism rather than hacking out stories every day means I have a career that revolves around my family, rather than a family life slapped together around an all-consuming job. When I was the woman trying to Have It All, Having It All felt exactly like having nothing.

I was struck hard by an interview that ran in *Life* with former Republican National Committee chairman Lee Atwater. As he lay dying of brain cancer, his body flooded with radiation, Atwater had this to say:

> I acquired more wealth, power, and prestige than most. But you can acquire all you want and still feel empty. What power wouldn't I trade for a little more time with my family? What price wouldn't I pay for an evening with friends. It took a deadly illness to put me eye to eye with that truth, a truth that the country, caught up in its ruthless ambitions, can learn on my dime.

Choosing to be a mother who spends most of her time with her sons is actually a convergence of the feminist ideals my era of women embraced—power, freedom, self-expression, and independence. Nothing ever felt so powerful, so free, so spiritually right, as becoming a militant mother who organizes a home and fights for her children on every front.

I think of the blurred weeks and years that whipped by when I was a supersonic journalist, intoxicated by the chase. The days often now break down into subtleties-in-the-second that leave me breathless from all there is to do during one minute and one hour in the Here and Now. Tangled in my children's wonder, I am constantly made aware of the extraordinary in the ordinary.

This feeling of freedom and rightness shows up in all parts of my life. Feminist pioneer Simone de Beauvoir (who was herself childless) once wrote that becoming a mother means the death of your erotic development. I have found exactly the opposite to be

*Iris Krasnow's book* Surrendering To Motherhood: Losing Your Mind, Finding Your Soul *is just out in paperback.*



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true. A woman's sexuality plays out to its peak in a period of your life when you are nursing and nuzzling and rocking babies, and sleeping with the committed father of your children.

I was a person who blossomed into womanhood at Stanford University in the middle 1970s. I drank deeply from the movements emanating from the Bay Area playground, looking for spiritual fulfillment and the meaning of life. My journey took me through Buddhism, est, Transcendental Meditation, macrobiotics, weightlifting, the Grateful Dead.

Today, I am no longer desperate to have a head-on with divine self-realization; that ended when I had a head-on with four sticky little boys. They have filled my soul with the serene knowing that God has come through for me. Having young children is like the last day of summer vacation, the sun on your face, the sand at your feet.

I'm aware that I am lucky to be a writer, a vocation that easily transfers to the home. But although I've had more choices than many women, I believe women in most fields have more choices than they think they have. A friend of mine in Annapolis, Maryland, has switched her baking shift at a catering company to 4 A.M. through 11 A.M so she can add to her husband's middle-class wages and still have days free for her kids. Another friend left her post as a buyer for a department store and now runs a flourishing business selling children's clothing from her living room, using her young daughters as models. I know lots of lawyers who have gone off partner-track and cut work weeks in half so they can be there to pick up their children at 3:15 P.M. If you want it badly enough and push hard enough, it is possible to forge work-family solutions that favor your children.

Spending a quantity of quality time with our children not only bolsters them; kids keep us connected to our finest selves. In our home in Maryland, I often sit in my kitchen and watch the amber of sunset on the river while my husband Chuck is upstairs scrubbing four boys in one bathtub.

I know now that I never again want to spend more time in an office with strangers than I do in my home with my family, the people I love the most.

And I go over my day—wiping banana off the TV screen, scraping mud off sneakers with a Swiss army knife, reading *Pocahontas* to four boys who are looking at their mother with reverence. And I am reminded that This Is As Good As It Gets.

On those days when I yearn to be dispatched on some exotic journalism assignment, I think of my interview some years ago with Zelda Fichandler, the then-65-year-old founder of Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage, one of the finest regional theaters in the country. As she spoke about her extremely successful career, I asked if she had any regrets in a remarkable life. She stared at me, her eyes black and piercing, then answered: "If I had a perfect life to live over again, I would spend the first five years of my children's lives at home. At the time, I never felt guilty about leaving the kids. I kept feeling 'this is worth it.' Now I give advice to young women to be very careful whether it's worth it. I'm not absolutely positive now that it's been worth it. Because of life not lived, books not read, art not seen, vacations not taken, conversations not held, flowers not smelled." Fichandler paused, then added: "I never had enough of my kids. I do feel that I was always there when they needed me. But I don't think I was always there when I needed them."

Other powerful women have voiced similar regrets about letting work overshadow their family lives. In a wonderful interview conducted by Oriana Fallaci, former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir reflected on trying to run a country and run a family at the same time:

> Such a struggle breaks out in you. Your heart goes to pieces. It's all running around, trying to be in two places at once, getting upset. All this can't help but be reflected in the structure of the family.
>
> I know that my children, when they were little, suffered a lot on my account. I left them alone so often. I was never with them when I should have been and would have liked to be.
>
> Oh, I remember how happy they were, my children, every time I didn't go to work because of a headache. They jumped and laughed and said, "Mamma's staying home! Mamma has a headache!"
>
> If you only knew how many times I say to myself, "To hell with everything, to hell with everybody, I've done my share, now let the others do theirs, enough, enough, enough."
>
> I like to be with nothing to do, even just sitting in an armchair, or wasting time with little things I enjoy. I should be the master of the clock, not the clock the master of me.

When we choose to become mothers, we make the most elemental commitment you can make as a human being, an irrevocable promise to take care of our offspring. We are not forced to reproduce. We become mothers because we want to, often because it's what we want more than anything else in the world. I respect my friends who choose not to have children because they admit to being too selfish. But I am saddened when the act of willing procreation doesn't cause selfishness to wane.

One Wednesday I went to visit an advertising executive who had given birth the Sunday before. She was propped up in bed talking on the telephone. With one hand she was holding



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her child to her breast, in the other hand she was clutching a newly arrived fax. The phone call about a client dispute was riling her, and she started swatting the air with the hand that had been securing her newborn. The baby dropped into the sea of papers that covered her bed. As my friend ranted on, there her daughter lay, with black ink smudged on her cheek. This mother was planning to return to work the following week.

I have heard other new mothers one-up each other with stories of how quickly they took their first business trip, how quickly they lost the 40 pounds of pregnancy weight, how quickly they were back chairing a committee, how quickly they returned to the jogging track. As someone who has been out that door too fast before, I now tell friends that their old bodies and old jobs and old social selves can wait. I tell them that their babies will be in first grade tomorrow, and that they shouldn't miss out on this glorious fingersnap of time. And when I am accused of being a hardliner who has abandoned her feminist ideals, I tell them there is nothing we can do as women that's more powerful than refusing to abandon motherhood.

**When I was the woman trying to Have It All, Having It All felt exactly like having nothing.**

I think of my artist friend who recently had a request from the Maryland governor's office to be considered to paint a portrait of the First Lady of the state. My friend didn't even pursue this lead, nor does she follow up on the stream of offers to show her work that she receives from prestigious galleries. She regularly turns down requests to teach college courses. At this stage, she doesn't want a bigger career, she wants to be with her children, ages seven and five. Although more money would

# What Do Parents Want?

**By Charmaine Yoest**

When the President and First Lady recently announced their plan to increase federal spending for day care by $22 billion over the next five years, they said such action is necessary to address a "silent child care crisis" that is afflicting the nation. Is there a child care crisis in America? What is it that parents want that they are not getting?

To help answer these questions, Wirthlin Worldwide recently conducted a national poll for the Family Research Council. A representative sample of parents were asked which kinds of child care they believed to be most desirable. The overwhelming first choice in child care: Care by a child's own mother. The next favorite choice was care by a child's own grandmother, aunt, or other family member, followed by care from a child's own mother and father working in a tag team. Then came care by a church-run center, care by a trusted neighbor or family friend, care by a home day care provider, and care by a nanny or *au pair*. Ranking eighth in popularity was care by a commercial day care center, followed by care in a government-run day care center in last place.

This decided preference for mother care showed up among all families, regardless of race, age, political views, or income. Trailing family care in popularity were community arrangements involving churches and neighbors. Parents who must entrust their children to others clearly prefer someone with whom they have a relationship. The least-preferred options were those that extended outside the community, involving nannies or *au pairs*, commercial child care centers, or government centers.

A growing body of other polling data uncovers this same desire for parental care of children. In May 1997, the Pew Research Center found that 25 percent of women with children under 18 who were employed full time would have preferred to be at home with their children. Another 44 percent wished they could work part time instead of full time. Asked whether they thought their work and child care arrangements were good for their children, only 41 percent of working women said yes.

In 1996, the Independent Women's Forum commissioned a poll which included the question: If you had enough money to live as comfortably as you'd like, would you prefer to work full time, work part time, do volunteer work, or work at home caring for your family? Thirty-one percent of the women replied that they would like to be at home with their children; another 33 percent replied that part-time work would be ideal; 20 percent expressed a preference for volunteer work; only 15 percent replied that they wanted to work full time.

These same preferences for mother care of children and flexibility in work arrangements showed up in a very large reader's survey done by *Parents* magazine in May 1996. Among 18,000 women who responded, only 4 percent said they would choose full-time employment if they could do "whatever they wished." Similarly, a 1995 Harris poll found that only 15 percent of a scientific sample of women would work full time if they "had enough money to live as comfortably as they would like."

This polling data about what parents want is remarkably consistent with what Census Bureau figures tell us American parents actually choose. Contrary to the media-driven perception that most children today are in day care, the vast majority of American children are actually cared for by their own families. *(See graph on page 47.)*

Of the 20 million children under the age of five in America today, nearly half (48 percent) have mothers who are at home full time. And of the remaining children whose mothers work either part time or full time, most are cared for during those hours either by their



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make her life significantly easier—her husband is a horticulturalist—she opts to work only a dozen or so hours a week in her studio doing portraits for local clients while her kids are in school. For this decision, her family is "practically poor." Yet she wouldn't trade her life for anybody's.

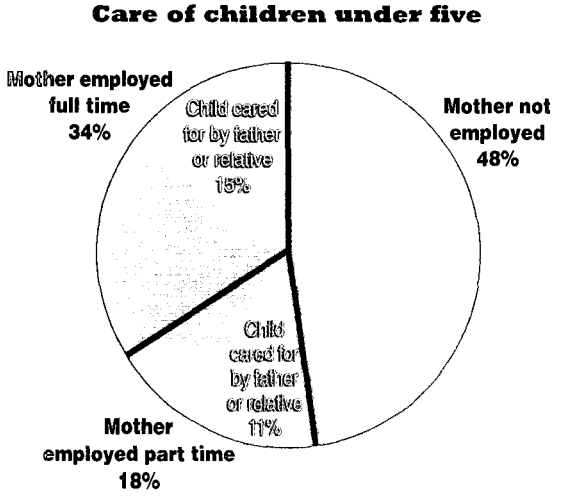
"I never sit down and say, 'Oh, we've got to get out there and make more money,'" she says. "I feel rich. I'm here all the time for these kids, and they are turning out well. They are not plunked in front of a TV by a baby sitter. They are baking and they are taking hikes and they are playing with me. You know, there's nothing wrong with the way we were raised in the '50s and '60s."

Disillusioned by old heroes like Simone de Beauvoir who never married or had children and instructed me to avoid housewife duty, my primary inspiration today comes from like-minded mothers who are trying to be at home more than at an office. Women like Charlene Quinn, a former White House fellow who is the mother of seven- and two-year-old children. I spent a spring afternoon on the Chesapeake Bay with her, eating huge strawberries from her garden, drinking orange Hi-C, and watching our children hurl driftwood.

With the sun beating down on us, Charlene told me she had just turned down an offer to become a free-lance health advisor to Newt Gingrich. "I'm too busy," she explained, giggling over what she was so busy doing—sewing costumes for her son's first-grade play. She said she loved to sew but hadn't done it for years because she had been too engrossed in her job.

I thought about this word *busy*, defined by the dictionary as "engaged in action" or "occupied." In my life as a globe-trotting journalist perhaps I kept busy because I was running away from myself. Being busy with children means something entirely different: Engaged in their action, occupied by their limbs and needs. I feel joyful to de-accelerate and be where I am, and who I am. These wriggly little boys have me imprisoned in the fleeting moment that is now.

## Most Families Take Care of Their Own Preschoolers




**Source:** Editor's calculations from 1994 U.S. Bureau of the Census data.

father (an additional 10 percent of all children), by a grandparent (another 9 percent), by another relative (5 percent), or by their mother while she works (3 percent).

In all, only 26 percent of all preschoolers are in hired day care (a big chunk of them in home day care). Though you would never know it from press reports, *three-quarters* of all very young children in the U.S. are still reared by their own family. For babies, all of these numbers are even higher.

Mrs. Clinton has referred to a "silent child care crisis." But if there is any element in today's day care debate that is silent it is the silent majority of parents who are making themselves available to their children without much recognition or support from society. The media repeat over and over that the dual-career family is today's norm, leaving child-raising parents to feel they are alone. They are not.

But what about couples who can't afford to have one parent stay at home? The common perception is that the decision to have one parent at home is a luxury practiced only by the well-off. Actually, quite the opposite is true: the median income of families with at-home mothers is $38,835. The median income of *dual*-earner families, on the other hand, is $57,637.

If helping poor families is the goal, Clinton-style day care subsidies are a very poor instrument. There are only 1.1 million preschoolers in this country who are poor and have working mothers, and most of these youngsters—52 percent—are being cared for by family members. They aren't in day care.

Since most low-income families don't purchase child care, the federal subsidies in the Clinton plan offer them nothing. Benefits targeted to day care as the President has proposed (instead of to mothers and fathers as others have suggested) not only discriminate against low- and middle-income American families who are struggling to keep one parent at home, but also reach only the tiniest fraction of families with children in poverty.

Federal intervention in child care should be guided by what parents want and what children need. At the very least, the government should be neutral and avoid social engineering that skews the child care market toward the commercial, institutional, and bureaucratized solutions that most parents avoid.

Mothers and fathers all across this country have spoken through their personal choices. If there are going to be government efforts to aid families, these should center on helping parents care for their own children.

*Charmaine Yoest, a Bradley Fellow at the University of Virginia and a mother of three children is the author of a larger paper on this subject just released by the Family Research Council.*



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DAY CARE

# is going home possible?

## LOTS OF FAMILIES SAY YES

**BY EVAN GAHR**

Anne Haley Brown sounds like the quintessential career woman. She boasts an Ivy League education, an elite law school degree, and a stint at Los Angeles' best known law firm.

But snagging a law firm partnership is the least of Brown's thoughts these days. This mother of two young girls, who hasn't worked since her second was born, has a more compelling task than fighting for a corner office: "I've got to get my daughters ready to stand on their little feet."

After that, Brown may return to work. But at the moment she isn't exactly pounding the pavement. The Stanford University law school grad may have been trained to bring witnesses to tears on cross-examination, but the only crying Brown sees regularly now are the misty eyes of her two youngsters. And that suits her just fine: Ever since her daughters were born "work just doesn't have the same importance to me."

Amidst the nation's ideologically charged child care debate, home-by-choice mothers like Brown barely register on the radar screen. Although day care is deemed a necessity to which the government must devote huge sums, these women—who run the gamut from secretaries to physicians—have discovered another option, a calling really.

It's one which feminists scorn, the mainstream media generally overlooks, and the Clinton administration ignores. Betty Friedan set the tone by deriding women who stay at home as inmates of comfortable concentration camps. More recently, Hillary Clinton let slip with the sneer that she wasn't the kind of mother to stay at home and bake cookies.

But many women with credentials to match Clinton's do stay home. Last year, Pepsi-Cola North America CEO Brenda Barnes, one of the highest ranking women in U.S. business, and on a fast track to an even higher spot, resigned to stay home with her kids. Her decision sparked intense, albeit fleeting media interest. But it was hardly an isolated event.

A recent survey of 900 female graduates of Harvard's medical, law, and business schools found that 85 percent thought decreasing their work hours after they became mothers might be detrimental to their careers—yet 70 percent did it anyway. And 25 percent of MBA graduates left the workforce entirely after a birth. Among mothers generally, far more concentrate on their children when they are young. *(See the data on page 47.)* This in spite of many contemporary expectations that motherhood will be a two-week detour—pop the kid, get back to work, climb the corporate ladder.

But a funny thing happens on the way to the office. Many women find that work just doesn't have the same glimmer when there is something warm and breathing to compare it to. Who wants to exchange pleasantries at the office water cooler when you can be at home making goo-goo eyes at your baby? Many women told they should "have it all" seem to be coming to the realization that all they really want is right at home during those years.

Psychologist Brenda Hunter, author of *The Power of Mother Love*, says that "Women are unprepared for the transforming event that motherhood is. Many fall in love with their children and do not return to the workplace."

Laura Collins, who quit her job as an art director for a Los Angles real estate



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firm, echoes those sentiments. "You have this little baby. Suddenly all these feelings come out that never happened before that make you want to stare at the baby for hours and nurture and hug her."

Like many women, Collins drifted into her role as an at-home mom. At first, she continued to work after her daughter Emma was born in 1994. During her lunch hour, Collins would drive home to play with her baby. Along the way one day, she listened to talk radio host Laura Schlessinger warn against leaving a child's upbringing to a nanny. Do you think if kids could make the choice they would really choose a nanny? asked Schlessinger. The words hit home with Collins, who thought of herself as the quintessential career woman. Eventually she told her husband, "I can't do it anymore."

"I haven't regretted it for a second. I felt I was cheating my children." The little secret here is that kids benefit tremendously when their mothers stay home. It's a secret for a number of reasons. For one thing, advertising that fact forces mothers who leave their kids with day care workers to face uncomfortable questions about their decision. Plus, lots of interest groups attack all arguments that might undercut the rationale for increased government involvement in child care.

"No one wants to report the truth because we might make someone feel guilty," says Heidi Brennan, public policy director for the support group Mothers-at-Home. Many individual mothers, however, find their own way to the conclusion that they are not replaceable.

Some try the caretaker route, only to find it woefully inadequate. Cathy Ross, for example, tried to balance her kids' needs with her job responsibilities at a California advertising agency. Eventually she quit. Referring to her 11-year-old son and her twin six-year-old daughters, she says "the mom they get after school at three o'clock is a lot more receptive than the one who barreled through the door at six and had to cram homework, baths, and dinner into a two-hour time frame."

Ross, who lives in San Clemente, says that her kids seem more secure now. And she has time to listen to their concerns. That's particularly important because children tend to "store up" things, and aren't likely to vent in a neat two hours.

Of course, what's best for kids often takes a back seat to politics. In an era when activists can't invoke "our children" often enough in their quests to justify various government programs, how do advocates treat women who actually bend their own lives for their children? The *Washington Post* recently editorialized that the "child care problem in this country isn't helping moms stay home." Brenda Hunter notes that last year's White House Child Care Conference "made the professional caregiver the national heroine," while at-home mothers were ignored. "Women who make the decision that their children are the most important part of their life" command no respect among liberal elites, she warns.

For many at-home mothers, the decision to be there for their children carries considerable financial and personal sacrifice. Heidi Brennan says it's a common misperception that staying home with your kids is a luxury for the rich. Actually, Census Bureau figures show that couples with one parent at home have much more modest incomes than others. Households where both parents work make about 50 percent more. *(See the graph on page 54.)*

Most families, however, contend that that's ultimately a small price to pay. Leslie Spencer and her husband cut their budget to the bone so that Mrs. Spencer could stay home after her daughter was born in 1995. The Spencers refinanced their car loan, dispensed with cable TV, stopped going out to eat, and even ditched call waiting. Yet these measures didn't quite offset the lost income from Mrs. Spencer's public relations job. To make up the difference, Spencer started a small home-business. She even founded a support group, Home-based Working Moms, for women who do the same.

"The real liberation is to be free to raise your children," says Laura Collins. "That's more emancipating than being a slave to your employer and missing out on those great years of seeing your kids grow up."

*Evan Gahr is a New Yorker who writes frequently for* TAE *on education and culture.*

# AMERICA'S NEWEST CORPORATE ADDRESS IS HOME SWEET HOME

**BY RICHARD MINITER**

Brent Winters runs Innovative Solutions & Technologies, an international software company, from the upstairs bedroom of his Joplin, Missouri home. His wife Robin fields his calls as another employee, a hard-working salesman, toils away in the den.

Sales grew by 92 percent last year and are expected to top $800,000 this year. Brent knows he has to hire more staff, but he refuses to move his booming business from his three-bedroom house. Why would he? "I can take a peek at my son and be back in my office in 30 seconds," he says. Another bonus: "I have lunch with my wife every day."

Brent Winters is a lot more than a quirky software company owner. He's one of more than 12 million Americans who run a full-time business from their home. The vast majority are keeping their business based at home specifically so they can spend more time with their family. Instead of returning from a distant job filled with stress and fatigue, home-based entrepreneurs can greet their children as they file off the school bus.

Working at home isn't just good for families, it is often good for checking accounts. At-home entrepreneurs save money by not commuting and not paying office rent. And many earn good incomes. Nearly 3 million home-based entrepreneurs earned more than $100,000 last year, according to a recent



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study by the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater's Home-based Business Project. Professor David Buchen, who conducted the research, expects the number of high-earning home enterprises to grow.

There are more Americans working at least part of the time from home than most people realize. As many as 40 million Americans conduct some work from home, says the National Association of the Self-Employed. These are a mixed bunch which include telecommuters, part-time business owners, and independent contractors.

By any measure, the number of at-home workers is rising. Certainly the membership lists of the organizations that have sprung up to serve at-home businesspeople are surging. Just two years after it was formed, the nonprofit Home Business Institute has more than 50,000 members.

Other organizations like Small Office Home Office and the American Association of Home-based Businesses are also helping make it more acceptable to run a business from home. "I used to buy those novelty tapes that have office noises so that people wouldn't realize I was working at home," says Connie Colten, president of Colten Creations, a Santee, California home business. "Now it is hip to be home."

Many famous entrepreneurial ventures were incubated in domestic settings—Apple Computer was born in Steven Wozniak's garage, Lillian Vernon cooked up her famous catalogue company on the kitchen table of her New York apartment, and Mo Siegel started tea-maker Celestial Seasonings in his rented A-frame outside of Boulder, Colorado, using a screen door to dry herbs. What sets many of today's home-based business owners apart is that they don't intend—ever—to leave home. And the desire to spend more time with their family is the number-one reason for this, according to Link Resources, a New York-based research group.

Experts cite these factors for the explosion of home-based businesses:

*Family life.* Many college-educated women start home businesses when they become mothers. Catherine Karabetsos and Karin Hall formed Quality Customer Service and Sales, a Wheeling, Illinois-based cosmetics telemarketing firm, in Hall's den in 1991. Karabetsos's four children and Hall's two children play nearby as the business partners send faxes and take calls. The $230,000-per-year enterprise now has five employees, all of whom are mothers working at home. "We wanted to be full-time moms and full-time marketers," says Karabetsos.

*New Technology.* Powerful new personal computers allow entrepreneurs to run complex enterprises without mail rooms, receptionists, or accountants. E-mail automatially arrives in the right place. Word processing and voice recognition software make secretaries obsolete. Computers can send and receive faxes, and even answer the phone. Tasks which once kept bookkeepers employed—calculating payroll, processing invoices, updating ledgers, paying taxes, and cutting checks—can now be done with the click of a mouse. Much of that software, fittingly, was first designed by Intuit founder Scott Cook in his California home. While many of these technological tools have been available for almost two decades, only in the past five years have they become cheap, easy to use, and widespread.

*Changing capital flows.* As competition from non-bank lenders increases, traditional banks are having to work harder to find new business customers. As a result they are starting to take home-based companies seriously. Venture capitalists, who saw a number of successful software start-ups begin in the founder's living room, now see starting a business at home as a plus—it saves precious capital and boosts productivity. GE Capital, an aggressive non-bank lender, is also targeting home-based entrepreneurs. As a result, unprecedented amounts of capital are pouring into home enterprises.

*Easing government regulation.* Many local governments now realize that small businesses create large numbers of jobs. They are beginning to loosen zoning and other restrictions that once barred entrepreneurs from running their business from home. Gaithersburg, Maryland, went from cracking down on home businesses by counting cars in residential driveways and issuing tickets in 1987 to writing special exemptions to allow firms to operate in residential neighborhoods in 1994. As a result, Gaithersburg is now one of the fastest growing home business markets in the country. Even big cities like San Francisco are revising their zoning rules. One beneficiary is Amy Holmen, producer of a national daily radio series with CBS's Charles Osgood. She works out of her greenhouse-like living room from her Russian Hill neighborhood.

*The benefits of downsizing.* The *Fortune* 500 have trimmed their payrolls by more than 4 million since 1985. That released an army of well-trained business managers to their homes. Many decided to stay there, creating their own firms and bringing a new level of expertise to home-based business.

Many home entrepreneurs fit the Paul Sessel model. He runs Creative Displays, which decorates commercial structures with lights, out of his four-bedroom house in Overland Park, Kansas. Sales have climbed more than 115 percent since he bought the firm three years ago—to more than $584,000 in 1996. Though he hires as many as 30 part-time employees during the peak winter months, Sessel has no plans to move operations from his home. "The best benefit to running my business at home is that I can work at any hour day or night," says Sessel. He values the increased time with his family. Sessel recently hired a new employee who will work from *his* own home.

There's lots of lobbying going on in Washington these days in the name of improving the lives of children and families. Imagine the social benefits if social conservatives did a little lobbying for measures that removed regulatory roadblocks and let parents work nearer to their children—say in the next room?

*Richard Miniter writes often for* The American Enterprise.



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# what we should&shouldn't do to help parents

## THE YEAR OF THE HOMEMAKER

**BY MAGGIE GALLAGHER**

1998 is shaping up to be the Year of the Homemaker and, boy, is it making a lot of people mad.

Activists can't believe that mere amateurs are wrestling the debate over "child care" away from the professionals. "We will not have a serious debate about how to allocate scarce resources," Faith Wohl, president of the Child Care Action Campaign, huffed to the *Boston Globe*, "as long as the issue is parental equity rather than the child care infrastructure."

President Clinton's $22 billion plan includes an expanded tax credit for parents who use commercial child care, as well as tax breaks for corporations that set up day care centers, and money for after-school care providers. But to the Democrats' surprise, Senate Republicans have coalesced around a proposal by Senators Chafee and Hatch that would extend the child care tax credit for the first time to stay-at-home moms (as well as to the large group of working moms who do not use commercial child care). Less commendably, the Chafee-Hatch proposal would, like the President's, expand other direct subsidies for commercial child care, such as new tax breaks for corporate day care, and an increase in the Child Care Block Grant. These child care benefits exclude homemakers and working moms whose kids are cared for without pay by family members (including fathers).

Still, all signs point to the historic inclusion for the first time of mothers-at-home in the government's definition of providers of safe, affordable, and high quality child care. The House recently voted unanimously for a resolution that "applauds" the efforts of at-home parents. At a recent hearing on child care sponsored by Senator Dan Coats, even the very liberal Democratic Senator Paul Wellstone agreed that helping hard-pressed homemaking families was a good idea. Following the GOP's lead, Senate Democrats have added to their child care bill a (much smaller) child care tax credit for parents at home.



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It's just not hip to be against homemakers anymore in Washington. Politicians have wised up to the fact that traditional families are by no means the extinct species that the cooked statistics of advocates have long suggested. Data show that three-quarters of all children under the age of five in this country are still cared for primarily by family members—overwhelmingly by parents themselves.

Child care advocates are in part the victims of their own rhetorical cleverness: They redubbed day care "child care" because the latter sounds so much cozier. But if good child care is your goal, why create a rigid benefit structure that rewards only parents who use paid services? Particularly given that married families with one income are much less affluent than dual-earner couples who pay for substitute care? *[See graph below.]*

Some critics take refuge in the idea that so-called "incentives" for at-home parenting are doomed to failure. Paul Harrington of Northeastern University argues that today's woman is so committed to the labor force it would take "a minor miracle" for the child care tax credit to change behavior.

Even Charles Murray, one of the most insightful social policy analysts in America, argued recently that "subsidizing" stay-at-home moms was futile. Imagine, he says, a mother making $20,000 who is offered a $2,000 child care tax credit: "The mother who quits her job to stay home with her child, forgoing a $20,000 income, is out of pocket $18,000—a 10 percent reduction in her sacrifice and a very weak financial incentive to stay home."

**How can I put together a package of time and money that will allow me and my family to get by?**

Such arguments miss the point: bribing mothers to stay home is not the goal of extending tax credits, giving families choices is. Mothers are not primarily wealth-maximizers, as Murray should know from his own research on welfare. It was Murray who pointed out that welfare moms don't do anything so crude as have babies in order to get money. Instead welfare payments merely *enable* these women to do what they already want to do: have a baby without worrying about who will pay the rent.

The truths Murray so articulately defended on welfare point to larger truths about how government affects family life: Government policies, including taxation patterns, affect not only economic decision-making but family behavior as well, and not always in the ways planned.

Research suggests that government-mandated parental leave, for example, while it sounds family-friendly, actually speeds up women's return to the work force. And the decision to have a child at all, private and personal though it may seem, turns out to be surprisingly sensitive to the amount of earnings the tax code allows families to protect. Historian Allan Carlson notes that research suggests a one percent increase in the value of the child exemption boosts birth probability by just about one percent.

From a strictly economic point of view, families' sensitivity to tax provisions like these makes little sense. Tax benefits never allow parents to recoup more than a fraction of the $8,000 or so in direct annual expenses that a child costs an average middle class family.

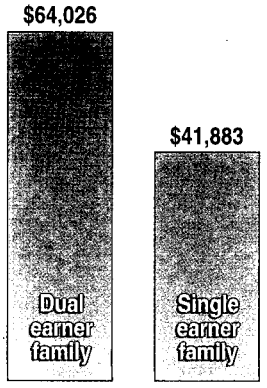
But when married mothers think about having another baby, or postponing the return to work, the question they ask is not: What strategy will increase my net worth the most? The answer to that is obvious—work continuously and have no children at all. Instead, what women with new babies ask is: How can I put together a package of time and money that will allow me and my family to get by?

There isn't a mom in America who is going to stay at home with her children in order to get extra money through the tax code. But being allowed to keep an extra hundred or two a month of family income will help a mother *who already wants to* to find ways to spend more time caring for her own kids. And it will ensure that moms who pick Daddy care over day care for their kids while they work aren't punished for that choice, either.

Staying home with a child even for a few years never makes any economic sense. A woman who does so not only loses her current wages, she almost certainly reduces her long-term earning power. That so many women long to put their first, best efforts into their kids and let corporations make do with what's left over is a testament to something else. Economists take note: there are forces at work in the universe even more powerful than money.

*Maggie Gallagher is an affiliate scholar at the Institute for American Values and a nationally syndicated columnist.*

**Which Childraisers Need Tax Relief More?**




**Note:** Median incomes of married-couple families where parents work full time.
**Source:** U.S. Bureau of the Census data.

## ENCOURAGE, DON'T PENALIZE PARENTING

**BY SUZY RYAN**

Today, my first grader, Keegan, had a day off school, so he joined his two younger siblings and me for the weekly grocery shopping. After fin-



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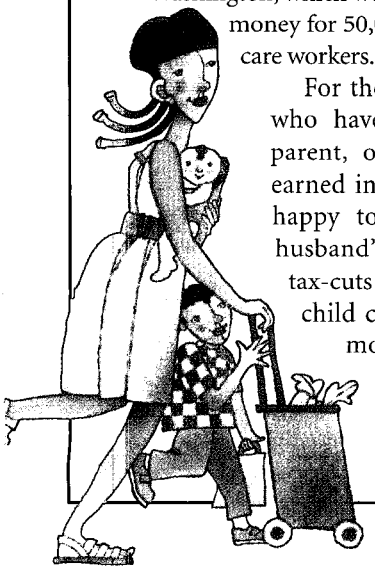
ishing our errands, we ate a quick peanut butter and jelly sandwich and then donned our Rollerblades so we could skate in the cul-de-sac before the latest El Niño deluge hit San Diego.

I smiled as we raced up and down the street, thinking about the blessing of staying at home with my children. Seven years ago, after Keegan was born, I desperately wanted to quit work. Finances prohibited it, so my husband and I developed a plan to achieve this goal. We refinanced our home. We decided to continue driving our 1984 Celica. And I started taking care of other children to make our budget work. Relinquishing my CNN habit to trim the cable bill, recycling our cans, and ironing Ken's work shirts seemed like small sacrifices in exchange for the possibility of full-time parenting. I traded power lunches for PB&J, but in the process I got abundant availability to my family.

This reminds me of the childhood of another woman, who wrote, "When I was a young child, I went everywhere with my parents." Who is this person? Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund.

Strangely, she is now one of the architects of President Clinton's $22 billion dollar day care initiative. Her stated regret that today we "do not have this kind of support system" rings hollow, because she refuses to offer families the kinds of assistance that would make it possible for more of them to be nurturers in their own homes. The parents of our great country overwhelmingly favor the kind of childhood care Ms. Edelman got, not the kind she is pushing now in Washington, which would provide money for 50,000 new day care workers.



For those families who have only one parent, or very low earned income, I am happy to share my husband's salary for tax-cuts to help with child care. I know money going directly to parents will benefit the family involved, and not go down the black hole of some federal program. Actually, the huge expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit in recent years already offer some of this kind of help to workers of modest incomes.

If more money is needed by families, why not increase the child exemption back to where it was before inflation set in? A $7,000 per child exemption would help parents a *lot* without forcing them to drop their cherubs into government orchestrated day care.

When my heart beckoned me to leave my own job, I wasn't expecting accolades from the government. But at the very least I don't want the government to penalize me. The recent words of Sen. Christopher Dodd, Connecticut Democrat, contending that many stay-at-home mothers have chosen the "luxury" of motherhood over employment because they "want to play golf or go to the club and play cards" struck me as unbelievable!

Do Sen. Dodd's words epitomize the liberal mindset behind Clinton's child care initiative? I thought the women's movement promised females, even mothers, the "choice" to pursue their dreams. Well, I left behind top dollars in the career arena to greet my children after school and play ball in the park with them. How dare Washingtonians betray women like me by invalidating our contribution to society!

After running inside, away from the downpour, the kids and I built a fire and played a game of *Go Fish.* (Sen. Dodd, the club where I play cards is my family room floor.) Exciting? No. Satisfying? Absolutely. Observing my offspring flourish makes it easy to accept the monetary reductions we've had to assume. What communist was it who said, "Give me a child for five years and he is mine for life?" I think I'll go surf the net with the kids and find out—right after I finish another PB&J.

*Suzy Ryan is a San Diego writer who last wrote for* TAE *in November/December 1997.*

# WHY THE MARKET CAN'T RAISE OUR CHILDREN FOR US

**BY JENNIFER ROBACK MORSE**

The typical free market argument in the child care debate runs approximately as follows: Markets give people what they want, at lower cost and with greater sensitivity to true needs than any governmental service can. Therefore, the market should provide child care. Just keep the government out of it. End of argument.

I believe it is a mistake for advocates of the free market (of which I am one) to build their case in this way. For while it's true that market-provided child care will usually be far superior to governmental versions, it's not true that market-provided child care will necessarily be adequate. Let me explain how I arrived at this seemingly paradoxical conclusion.

I am an economist by training, currently living in Silicon Valley. Before I became a mother, I was sympathetic with the argument that the market would provide good enough child care to allow me to continue my career. I was predisposed to become a stereotypical working mother. Put the kids in day care. Hire a nanny. Don't allow children to deter you from pursuing your career. In my case, it was not radical feminism that influenced my thinking. It was conservative economics, with its emphasis on income-maximizing and career-building. I had no idea how much my working would affect my children, and no way of anticipating how much motherhood would alter my own attitudes.

In a nutshell, the problem with the "markets will provide" argument is that it concedes too many dubious premises to the feminist world view. For example: "The work of parents, and particularly mothers, is not especially challenging, difficult, or important. Therefore, providing substitutes for mothers' care of children poses no



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problem." In other words, any idiot can provide perfectly adequate child care. Or: "The work women do in the market is more socially valuable than the work they do in the home, at least for highly educated, highly skilled women. So a corporate lawyer is perfectly rational to hire an illegal alien to care for her children while she goes off each day to earn big bucks." In other words, some women are too important to take care of their own children.

These are things I might have said in the days before I became a mother, when I could analyze child care as nothing but an economic issue. But when I consider my own particular children, rather than hypothetical children, I cannot be convinced for a minute of the truth of these claims. There is no good substitute for my care. I can hire help once in a while, but hired help cannot create a home or raise a child. I can no longer accept the claim that the size of my paycheck measures the value of my contributions to society. My monetary income has shrunk since I became a mother, but my societal contributions as a mother exceed the number of dollars typed on my W-2 form at the end of the year.

The most insidious hidden premise behind the push for day care is that all women want to work. My observation is that most mothers of small children do not want "high quality day care." Many prefer not to work at all, or to have other family members care for their children.

In no case should we assume that women's wants are completely given. Many women, of various ideologies and all income levels, have been seduced by the siren calls of feminist theorizing. Some of us have come to believe that our self-esteem depends upon our jobs, or that we appear weak if we admit that taking care of children is enjoyable. Some women assume that child care is mind-numbing, spirit-killing drudgery, and that only work outside the home is fulfilling. These are not necessarily statements that women would come up with spontaneously, in the absence of feminist tutoring.

**My social contributions as a mother far exceed the number of dollars typed on my W-2 form at the end of the year.**

For many feminists, the overwhelming argument in favor of women working is that women with paychecks are more powerful than women without any income of their own. Those of us who admire the free market agree that dollar power is real power. But dollar power is not the only kind of power. Losing control over what happens to one's children is for many women a devastating loss of power. Surrendering day-to-day contact with one's children, giving up the ability to influence their development, surely these count as losses of power for any mother or father.

Finally, we know that "the market will provide" doesn't mean every family will find a perfect "Mary Poppins" as a live-in nanny. The market will provide much less costly care for the vast majority of families. Paid child care can only be an economical choice for lower income women if the cost is lower than their own wages. This lower cost child care will in practice mean using economies of scale by caring for children in groups, either in someone's home or in day care centers. Group care will necessarily be the market-provided solution for the vast majority of women.

Unfortunately, research shows extensive group care isn't healthy for infants. Brand-new babies don't need to interact with each other. Other infants compete for adult attentiveness. If infants need any contact with other children at all, they need the doting attention of older siblings. Older brothers and sisters provide role models for talking, crawling up stairs, walking, eating with a spoon, and lots of other things. An infant in a day care center is unlikely to receive the rich attentiveness that is possible inside a family.

Here is a modern irony: One of the arguments against large families is that children in small families receive more attention from their parents. On the other hand, modern families are willing to leave their children in group care, with child/adult ratios of four to one considered "high-quality care" for children from six weeks old up to age two.

I have many Catholic friends who home school their children. Some of these families have as many as ten children. I cannot think of a single such family with four children under the age of two, or ten preschool children, or 20 second-graders. (As we say in Silicon Valley, do the math.) Children of large families at least have each other. Does anybody really think that children are better off with no siblings, and their days spent in small herds with paid caretakers?

Social science research suggests that too much child care at too young an age places a child at risk for being insecurely attached to his parents. Insecure attachments, in turn, have been correlated with difficulties in later childhood, including low tolerance for frustration, less willingness to take risks, less ability to empathize with others, and a greater tendency to have temper tantrums. Secure attachments, on the other hand, seem to be the foundation for self-confidence and trust. Surely advocates of the free market can't be indifferent about which kinds of traits children develop. A *laissez faire* world, after all, requires adults who can restrain themselves, who have regard for others, and who can trust and be trustworthy.

There are inherent limits to how much responsibility parents can delegate to people caring for their children. To explain, let me summarize my own activities as a stay-at-home-mom on any given day.

One of my children has such a tender conscience that she bursts into tears at the realization of having done



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something wrong. The other requires a small 2x4 to get that same message. One child plays every injury for maximum drama, demanding a band-aid for microscopic boo-boos. The other child is so impervious to pain if you hear a whimper out of him it's best to just dial 911.

Then there is the job of providing encouragement—skating the fine line between asking too much too soon and making necessary demands for improvement. How much writing should I expect of the child for whom holding a pencil is a major effort? (Meanwhile, the younger child can write little stories without breaking a sweat.) I know what these children are capable of doing. One thing they are fully capable of doing is bamboozling a stranger into thinking they can't do much. On the other hand, there is no point in asking them to do something so far out of their capacity that I might as well be asking them to solve a differential equation.

In their social interactions with each other and neighborhood children, my son and daughter need more than generalized instructions to share and be nice. Sometimes they'd like to persuade another child to play, but have no idea what to offer. They might be able to formulate the thought, "I want that other kid's toy. I know my mom does not want me to punch him to get it," but then get stuck. They need coaching, not only of their actions but also of their words and even thoughts. Knowing when a particular child is ready to go to a new level, knowing what level of abstraction he can grasp, knowing how much frustration he can tolerate—this is the daily work of motherhood.

Now I ask you: who am I going to pay to do all this? How am I going to give instructions in sufficient detail to a babysitter? There is of course nothing wrong with hiring some help. But it is not possible to delegate to either the government or the market the innumerable tasks that go into raising any particular child.

Those of us who once accepted the arguments in favor of paid child care didn't realize how much individual attention we actually received when we were very young, and how difficult it would be to pay someone else to give our own kids what we took for granted. Little did we know how much our mother's help with homework blunted the impact of impersonal schools. Those talks around the kitchen table gave us more than we realized, guidance that can't easily be imparted by a nanny or a day care worker. Nor did we have any idea how much we benefited from our relationships with our siblings—connections impossible to replicate in classrooms.

As for claims that freeing women from the demands of child raising is a kind of liberation—is most work in the market really so glamorous and fulfilling? Instead of finding intelligent women molding members of America's next generation, we now often find them stacked in law offices writing wills and doing house closings. Instead of introducing their own children to great literature and world history, bright women are sequestered in university offices, grading piles of illegible midterms written by other people's children. How did we forget that guiding our offspring requires knowledge far more subtle, and pays bounties far richer, than most jobs?

Lots of women are now realizing what many men have known all along: Working is not always fun or satisfying. Most of the tasks men do in the labor force contain large amounts of drudgery. The millions of fathers who get up in the morning to go to work, day after long day, don't usually do it because their jobs are intrinsically fulfilling. Most of them, much of the time, work out of love of their families.

It is attachment to their wives and children that keeps men reporting as truck mechanics and cab drivers. It is a sense of loving duty that keeps men standing on subway platforms that lead to fluorescent-lit offices. The drudgery of caring for small children is nothing compared to the drudgery of factory work or a data entry job. For many workers, the tedium of a humdrum job is relieved more than anything else by coming home to a noisy household.

Some Americans conceive of personal liberty as the right to do anything they want, so long as it is peaceful and non-coercive. In this conception, individuals have a responsibility only to refrain from using force, and from defrauding others.

This is an insufficient vision of the individual's responsibility within a self-governing society. Delegating most of the care of a child to hired help is not force or fraud. It is, however, an extremely negligent act. A free society cannot long survive if large numbers of people choose to discharge their parental duties in this perfunctory way.

The basic problem with the market as a child care provider is that we end up relying on it too much—because it is so convenient. The market is a wonderful institution because it gives us what we want. When our wants are skewed, the market satisfies them just the same. In this way markets reveal parts of us that we might prefer not to see.

But when we observe the truth about ourselves, we can change. It took me an embarrassingly long time to realize that my two children needed me at home more than they needed anything my income would buy for them. It took even longer for me to realize that placing my intellect at the service of my family was a greater challenge than my ordinary life as a university professor. I had accepted far more feminist premises than I had realized. It is my hope that these thoughts will help other mothers who are wavering to take the plunge and do what they really want to do: stay home.

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# Asia Unravels

## Could this be the sequel to the fall of the Berlin Wall?

**Bruce Bartlett**
**James Glassman**
**Leon Hadar**
**Lawrence Lindsey**
**William Safire**
**Fareed Zakaria**

THE FIRST MILESTONE IN THE SPREAD OF ECONOMIC FREEDOM ACROSS THE GLOBE WAS THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL. THAT SIGNALED THE END OF TOTALITARIAN ECONOMIC CENTRALISM. ¶ SOME OBSERVERS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE CURRENT ASIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS—WHERE GOVERNMENT STEERING OF THE ECONOMY IN NATIONS LIKE INDONESIA, KOREA, JAPAN, AND MALAYSIA IS MEETING BITTER ENDS—COULD EVENTUALLY PROVE TO BE A SIMILAR TURNING POINT ON THE ROAD TO GLOBAL ECONOMIC LIBERALISM. ¶ IN THIS VIEW, ASIAN VARIETIES OF STATE-MANIPULATED CAPITALISM ARE NOW FAILING IN WAYS THAT COULD LEAVE SOFT FORMS OF ECONOMIC CENTRALISM ALMOST AS DISCREDITED AS HARD SOCIALISM. ¶ FOLLOWING ARE REFLECTIONS ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE FROM SIX EXPERT OBSERVERS.



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THE GREASING OF GOVERNMENT PALMS WAS ADVERTISED AS A NEWLY STABLE FORM OF CAPITALISM.

—WILLIAM SAFIRE

## LOOK WHO'S DECLINING NOW

By Leon Hadar

RETURNING FROM EAST ASIA, an observer can only be thrilled by the intellectual sea-change taking place in public opinion there, especially among young members of the business and political elites. The American media have focused on bashings of Wall Street and Washington among the old guard in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Korea, but the reaction among the "cosmo-yuppies" has been quite different. For them, the savvy Wall Street financier and the risk-taking Silicon Valley entrepreneur are role models.

The most dramatic change is in Seoul, where just a few months ago policy makers were boasting about their success in establishing a Japanese-style financial system, with its cozy "long-term" relationships of cross-stockholdings, preferential financing, and "patient" investment. Well, those long-term investments have produced, as in Japan, multiple long-term disasters, and now the Koreans are replacing the Japanese model with American-style capitalism. Bye-bye to the enlightened government bureaucrat, the "prudent" banker, and the well-connected business executive; hello to the hostile takeover, the assertive shareholder, the unforgiving financial market, and the foreign speculator who is searching for (imagine!) immediate returns.

This move by the Koreans, the crumbling of Indonesia's crony capitalist "one family state," the push for political and economic reform in Thailand and Malaysia, and the economic and political crisis in Tokyo are as historically significant as the collapse of communism in Europe. Is there a "bamboo curtain" equivalent to the fall of the Berlin Wall? Nothing as photogenic, but perhaps one could substitute the collapse of South Korea's giant Hanbo Steel under $6 billion in debts—the first bankruptcy of a leading conglomerate in a decade. Or the weeping executive announcing the closure of Yamaichi Securities, Japan's most prestigious broker, a week after Japan's top financial official predicted, "I do not think Yamaichi will collapse." Or Thailand's Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh announcing, "We will never devalue the baht," only to do exactly that two weeks later—and then resign. Or Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir lashing out at U.S. financier George Soros and a global cabal for the dashing of Asian currencies. Or Indonesia's dictator Suharto announcing the closure of troubled companies owned by his family and partners.

THE COLLAPSE OF EUROPEAN COMMUNISM sped up change in the Asian economies, as huge amounts of foreign investment were redirected into Eastern European nations, and their citizens were exposed to such Westernizing influences as the Internet and CNN. East Asia's political authoritarians and economic nationalists were forced to recognize that government control of the economy must be loosened in order to secure the flow of foreign investment and ideas. The same process also weakened governments' political clout.

Yet East Asian leaders believed the Japanese model would allow them to have their cake and eat it too. They would be able to exploit the productive forces of the market and the global economy by allowing private property, offering incentives to exports, and attracting foreign direct investment with capital-friendly policies, while still keeping overall economic strategy under the command of corporate-government elites.

The Japanese model did help initiate a high-growth phase among the Asian tigers, injecting them with capital and Western technology. But it proved unsustainable, brought down by the notion that decisions made by business-government cooperation could be as efficient as those made by free markets. In fact, "cooperative" institutions like the Chinese *guanxi*, the Korean *chaebol*, the Japanese *keiretsu*, and Indonesian "communal capitalism" led first to Japan's bubble economy and then to financial wreckage in the rest of East Asia. Authoritarian and disciplinarian regimes simply cannot encourage innovation, adaptation, and the development of new ideas—the kind of "creative destruction" needed for the rise of new industries and companies.

Still, the fall of the bamboo curtain doesn't necessarily mean a new era of political and economic utopia is opening. The free market doesn't guarantee perfect outcomes. Success depends on such things as the existence of effective mediating institutions in society, a powerful work ethic, high education standards, a willingness to adapt. Freeing an economy from its political chains, whether in Eastern Europe or East Asia, releases the best and worst in society. Where the social conditions for democratic capitalism do not exist, the result can be a slide toward chaos or a return to authoritarianism.

There will not be a monolithic new East Asian way. The shape of reform will depend on the political leaders in charge. The continuing rule of Suharto in Indonesia, for instance, may postpone political and economic reckoning and lead to civil war that could tear the archipelago apart. On the other hand, many observers believe South Korea's new president, Kim Dae Jung, will succeed in mobilizing the public, the business community, and the labor unions to transform the old system there.

China's future remains uncertain, with the leadership apparently unable to reform the decaying banking system and dallying with replacing the present system of state-owned companies with a Korean-like *chaebol* complex. At the same time, Greater China—which includes Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore—has weathered the recent turmoil better than most countries. If China continues to liberalize, and moves toward



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the Hong Kong/Taiwan/U.S. model rather than the Japan/Korea model, it could soon replace Japan as the region's economic locomotive, as well as its central political player.

Most of East Asia should be able to make a successful transition toward a more Americanized version of capitalism. Their ability to absorb new ideas and technologies, combined with their strong family ties, respect for education, and hard work, could eventually leave the region's economies far better off in their more open form. Perhaps then the Asian crisis will even teach statist intellectual elites in America and Western Europe to abandon their daydreams of economic nationalism (read: protectionism), and "compassionate" (read: regulated) capitalism.

*Leon T. Hadar covers international politics and economics for several East Asian publications, and is an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute.*

## End of the Asian Model?

By Lawrence Lindsey

For nearly two decades, Americans have been lectured on the supposed superiority of the Asian economic model. Some of the most prominent lecturers, including former Prime Minister Lee of Singapore and Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia, did indeed have success stories to tell. Others, particularly American admirers of Asia, had the ulterior motive of concentrating U.S. power in the hands of the state through national economic planning, also known as "industrial policy."

While the Asian model covers a variety of economic arrangements, it essentially consists of a Confucian-style understanding of the nation as an extended family. The "father figure" under this paternalistic system is an elite bureaucracy of wisemen.

Government by "the best and the brightest," collective goal-setting, government engineering of things like high personal savings rates, an emphasis on consensus, and an elevation of communal over individual interests were seen as virtues beyond reproach, particularly by the "politically correct"elites in the West.

Yet, even these most attractive elements of the Asian model contributed to the problems Asia now faces. First consider leadership by a highly trained bureaucratic elite created through educational testing and weeding. Although highly trained, Asian bureaucracies generally have a serious dearth of real-world experience. Few of these mandarins has ever run a firm, produced a patent, sold a product door to door, or had any of the other business experiences that many of America's elites have had. In populist American English, these "eggheads" have never worked for a living. (Indeed, in a supposedly paternalistic society, few can even make time in their regimented high-pressure careers to be hands-on fathers.) This focus on educational credentials led to a society in which academic theories and bureaucratic politics often overrode empirical realities.

At the core of this arrangement lay the fabled education system, in which admission to a top university leads to a top job. The process begins early—with competition for admission to the best preschools. The strains on children are intense, and include going to after-school exam-prep classes, and then working late into the night on homework. Today, the social and psychological effects of this system are being widely questioned, especially in Japan.

And the economic cost is also high. There is no room for "late bloomers" or for persons whose talents don't run to memorization and rote learning. There are no Microsofts in Japan because a Harvard dropout like Bill Gates would be a "failure" and never get a bank loan. But a mind is a terrible thing to waste, even if it failed the "big test" at age 11. A diversity of skills and talents which can each find their own best use in a market, versus a single standard of educational excellence, is what an economy needs to flourish.

As for saving, the case can certainly be made that America should save more. But Asia shows that too high a national saving rate can also hinder economic success, especially if the savings are captive. Consumption was discouraged, and Asian savings could not flow abroad; the well-educated bureaucratic elites would not permit it. Instead, they channeled people's savings to uses they considered worthy at home. As a result, capital has often been treated as if it were free in Asia, and so returns on capital investment have likewise tended toward zero. Even highly successful companies like Toyota provide a return on their capital which is only a fraction of that produced by General Motors or Ford.

Japanese families, in turn, are forced to live in tiny houses, commute long distances to work on standing-room-only railways, and forgo consumption on a startling amount of their income. Implicitly, they make these sacrifices so that the cost of corporate capital can be drastically reduced, and it's all part of being a member of the "family" that is the typical national Asian economy.

Finally, there is the supposedly enviable Asian trait of consensus. Leaders the world over admire this trait—because, in practice, it means very little disagreement with the leadership's decisions. For example, lifetime employment in Japan means that you cannot leave your company, no matter how badly you are treated, because no one else will hire you. As a result of the insistence on consensus, there is no flexible labor market, there is a bureaucratically-directed capital market, and there is no way out if you disagree with national, corporate, or family priorities. Once a decision has been made, it is carried out, even if the decision leads to economic failure.

In the American economy, the diversity of decision makers and the multitude of economic experiments (many of which fail) is called "messy" and "wasteful" by those who dream of smoothly running, neat, and orderly societies. But the variety of economic experiments in an American-style market economy has one big advantage—diversification. There may be plenty of small failures and bad decisions, but they rarely bring down the whole system. By contrast, an Asian-style economy may produce spectacular returns if the decision makers make good choices, but all of society's resources hang on the wisdom of those few choices. When failure strikes, it may well be profound and protracted.



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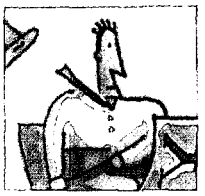

ALTHOUGH HIGHLY TRAINED, ASIAN BUREAUCRATS GENERALLY HAVE A DEARTH OF REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE. FEW HAVE EVER RUN A FIRM, PRODUCED A PATENT, OR SOLD A PRODUCT.

—LAWRENCE LINDSEY

We Americans have no reason to be smug about the current Asian crisis. Not too long ago many of our elite thinkers claimed the Asian model was the wave of the future, and it may be viewed so again. But now we have two reasons not to go the way of Asia. First, as we have always realized, the individual is much freer and better off in an American-style system. Second, it's now clear that it's not good for a national economy to put all the eggs in one basket, for though this can produce some good economic runs, it also risks spectacular failure.

*Lawrence Lindsey holds the Arthur F. Burns Chair at the American Enterprise Institute, and is a former governor of the Federal Reserve Board.*

## KEEP THE BABY, DUMP THE BATHWATER

By Bruce Bartlett

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE "ASIAN MIRACLE" has always been much less glamorous than the myth put out by Asian leaders and their admirers in the West. According to the myth, several Asian countries, especially Japan, found a "third way" between U.S.-style capitalism, on the one hand, and Soviet-style central planning on the other. This Asian novelty involved a high degree of government planning, but stopped short of the total economic control that ultimately destroyed communism.

Liberals in the West have always sought a "third way," because they cannot bring themselves to admit that the free market is the best economic arrangement. Thus in the 1930s, liberals admired Swedish-style socialism, which seemed to achieve prosperity while safeguarding political freedom. In the 1950s, they had a fleeting infatuation with French "indicative" planning, a sort of voluntary central planning.

Neither the Swedish nor the French model made much headway in America, because although they promised a more egalitarian society, they could not achieve the higher growth America enjoyed from World War II until 1973.

After 1973, the rate of U.S. economic growth fell sharply and support for some sort of government economic planning increased. People began to notice the Asian model and looked to Japan. The new model had a major advantage over the earlier Swedish and French versions in that it seemed to offer not only more equality, but faster growth as well.

The essentials of the Asian model, as retold in numerous books and articles in the 1970s and '80s, were enlightened planning by government bureaucrats, who would skillfully use tax, credit, and trade policies to encourage industrial "winners" while humanely killing off the "losers"; greater equality of income distribution; lifetime jobs and a reluctance to lay off workers even during recessions; and a high degree of government "investment" in education, public works, and research and development.

American admirers of the Asian model, such as former Labor Secretary Robert Reich and *U.S. News & World Report* editor James Fallows, urged the adoption of Asian-style "industrial policy" in the United States. The new economy of high-tech, knowledge-based business was said to require more trade restrictions to keep out foreign semiconductors, for example. The semiconductor industry was an "infant industry" that needed government nurturing, lest it be killed in the crib by a wave of cheap imports.

In the 1980s, a whole mythology about the overwhelming might of Asian businesses developed. Backed by their governments, they were said to systemically conquer markets the way Caesar conquered Gaul. News of Japanese initiatives to develop a "third generation" computer or high-definition television created panic in government and business circles. The press threw gasoline on the fire by hyping foreign purchases of American real estate and businesses, implying that America would soon be a wholly owned subsidiary of "Japan, Inc." Movie and novel writers joined in.

The truth was always less sensational and therefore less interesting. In obscure academic journals, economists carefully documented how Asian success was built on the wise application of well-known economic principles: Asians saved more, invested more in education, kept taxes low, maintained stable prices, protected property rights, and, contrary to popular belief, largely practiced free trade. In short, there was nothing special about Asian economic success; it could easily be explained by standard free-market theory.

What, then, led to the recent economic debacle in Asia? I would argue it is entirely a financial problem—not, like the collapse of communism, the result of a fundamentally flawed economic arrangement, but instead the result of mistakes in the banking sector caused by misguided but correctable policies, the equivalent of the U.S. savings and loan crisis. It will cost Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia a lot of money to fix, as the S&L crisis cost American taxpayers, but it does not invalidate the basic soundness of Asian economic policies.

Of course, Asian industrial policies certainly contributed to the financial crisis. Giving governments the power to confer benefits on specific companies in the name of industrial policy opens the door to "crony capitalism" and all its corruption and waste.

While the Asian financial crisis may have discredited the Asian model, we must not throw the baby out with the bathwater. The silly stuff, like the idea that bureaucrats in Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry have some kind of magic touch, must go. But the real keys to Asian growth—high saving and investment, low taxes and the like—must not.

If the current crisis leads Asia to abandon industrial policy, it may have been worth the cost. Of course, liberal planning



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advocates will feel jilted by their Asian lover. But they will eventually find another "third way" to moon over. In their eyes, the free market will never triumph.

*Bruce Bartlett is a former Treasury Department official, and a senior fellow with the National Center for Policy Analysis.*

## A Chance to Improve

By Fareed Zakaria

ONE YEAR AGO EAST ASIA COULD DO NO WRONG. Its people were bright, hard working, and thrifty; its governments, wise and far-seeing; and its system a model for the developing world—with some lessons for the West as well. Today these same countries can do nothing right. Their governments are corrupt, rigid, and interventionist; their people, passive and unimaginative; and their economic system not capitalism at all but a blend of authoritarianism and cronyism which the West must help dismantle immediately. In fact neither end of this pendulum swing is correct.

First, recall that in the last 50 years, well over 100 "underdeveloped" countries struggled to break out of poverty, but only the East Asians managed to do so. (More recently, the Latin Americans have followed.) Despite having almost no natural resources, these countries moved from per capita GDP levels of $300 to $400 a year to their current levels, which go from $3,500 (Indonesia) to $23,000 (Singapore). And all this in one generation—probably the fastest move from poverty to plenty in history, certainly faster than that of Western countries, who took over 100 years to make the same progress. And the East Asians did it by adopting mostly free-market and free-trade economic policies. (Countries like India, Egypt, and Brazil, by contrast, though darlings of Western intellectuals and heavy recipients of aid because they embraced fashionable economic theories purveyed by the London School of Economics, the World Bank, John Kenneth Galbraith, and other eminences, lagged far behind.)

Some years ago the World Bank issued a report, *The East Asian Miracle*, which tried to explain that region's extraordinary growth. It concluded that economic policies—intervention in Singapore, *chaebol* conglomerates in South Korea, *laissez faire* in Hong Kong—didn't make much difference, since all these countries were growing equally fast. What these countries had in common, however, were fundamentals—a broad hospitality to the free market and the world economy, high levels of savings and investment, an emphasis on education and technology.

There is no Asian model. Asian countries grew fast because they got fundamentals right; the tinkering of tariffs and subsidies had little effect. (In this they mirror the growth pattern of European countries for the last two centuries. *Laissez faire* England and Holland grew fast, but so did statist Germany and France.)

These basic strengths still exist in East Asia today, and they will help most of these countries weather the crises that currently embroil them—Indonesia is the most vulnerable—though they will face a few rough years. The recession in East Asia started as a financial crisis, caused in part by the linkage of the region's currencies to an appreciating dollar. The effects have been powerful, but they are not permanent or irreversible. Most industrialized countries have had their share of financial crises and economic slowdowns. In the late nineteenth century the United States careened from boom to bust to boom, yet it was the world's fastest growing country.

The current crisis in East Asia has highlighted many wasteful and inefficient economic practices, and many corrupt and autocratic political elements. States that reform their economies will improve, and those that reform both their economies and their political systems will do even better. This is not, however, a peculiarly Asian problem. The United States went through a series of economic crises in the 1970s, recovering only when Ronald Reagan and Paul Volcker began changing fiscal, monetary, and regulatory policies that had been in place for decades. Western Europe faces its own crisis of high unemployment, slow growth, and no innovation; it needs radical reform. In every country, institutions and practices become outmoded and need to be reformed or discarded. At some level, this is a consequence of growth.

DO CURRENT EVENTS IN EAST ASIA SUGGEST the fall of a "second Berlin Wall"? They certainly represent an important marking point in the development of these countries, but the Berlin Wall analogy fails because it implies East Asian countries have quasi-totalitarian economies. Many do have tariffs, subsidies, and government-directed investments, but no less so than many European countries. Why are Germany's lavish subsidies to its firms, farmers, and pensioners a lesser abrogation of freedom than South Korea's subsidies to its manufacturing cartels? Perhaps the International Monetary Fund should dispense its advice about restructuring economic systems where it's really needed—in Paris and Bonn.

East Asian governments consume about 25 percent of their countries' GDP (the crucial measure of economic statism). In Western nations that figure ranges from America's 33 percent to France's 53 percent, with most closer to France. Thus tax rates in East Asia are actually considerably lower than in the West. Arguably, economic freedoms are more secure in East Asia than in Western Europe.

In Mandarin, the word *crisis* is famously made up of a combination of the characters for danger and opportunity. The present financial crisis in East Asia presents an important opportunity for much-needed reforms in both the economic and political systems of the affected countries. But in our urge to push these countries further and faster, let us not forget how far they have already traveled.

*Fareed Zakaria is the managing editor of* Foreign Affairs.

## Why Softening the Blow is a Mistake

By James K. Glassman

THE MELTDOWN IN THE ECONOMIES of Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia happened suddenly, but it shouldn't have been a shock. It's clear that banks in those countries, directed by their governments, made many terrible loans to favored businesses in favored industries. Those businesses built too many mi-



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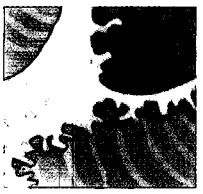

LIBERALS HAVE ALWAYS SOUGHT A "THIRD WAY"—LIKE JAPANESE INDUSTRIAL PLANNING—BECAUSE THEY CAN'T BRING THEMSELVES TO ADMIT FREE MARKETS ARE THE BEST. —BRUCE BARTLETT

crochip factories, too many auto plants, too many steel mills. They covered up their losses and, with government collusion, so did the banks. Only with the collapse of the national currencies did the hidden become visible.

The big question is, Why were *foreign* investors—and especially foreign banks—also shoveling so much money into these over-invested businesses? Why, with all the opportunities at home and around the world, did bankers from the U.S., Japan, Germany, and France throw hundreds of billions of dollars into risky Asian loans?

Sure, lenders make mistakes, but something else was happening that caused them to believe the risks were lower than they actually were: Any time lenders got nervous they just looked at Mexico and concluded that, if the loans went bad, the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. Treasury, and other well-stocked institutions would bail them out.

The tendency for insurance to encourage the activity that's being insured against is known to economists as "moral hazard." In this case, the pattern of rushing in emergency international aid to soften economic crises actually encouraged the making of bad loans that helped *set up* the crises. Moral hazard must be eliminated, or drastically curtailed, if market forces are to produce the desired end in Asia: not simply the quick revival of these economies, but something much more important—their restructuring.

A "second Berlin Wall" can fall in Asia, but only if capital is allowed to move freely, seeking its best use. Those powerful capital flows can shape nations and economies; they could, I believe, put an end to the command-and-control capitalism that prevails in much of Asia. But the power of capital flows will take effect only if the buffer of moral hazard is removed. As long as investors believe they'll be rescued by international agencies if they get into trouble, they'll continue to risk money in countries where important free-market disciplines are absent. Stop doing bailouts, however, and countries where the government interferes heavily in the economy will find it hard to attract lending and investment.

That's the irony of the International Monetary Fund's efforts in Asia today. The IMF seems to be asking for the right reforms—transparent business dealings, less government interference, more foreign ownership of assets—but it is also reducing the chances those very goals will be achieved because of the bailouts it is offering. The free-market goals would be reached anyway, without prescription, if market forces were given full play.

Unfortunately, the IMF bailout will proceed. And as the crisis softens, many of the hard choices needed to carry out reforms will be postponed. Thus, another cycle of over-investment and bankruptcy lies ahead. We will probably need a third economic crisis to bring down the second Berlin Wall.

*James Glassman is the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.*

## GRAVY TRAINS DON'T RUN ON TIME

By William Safire

THE GREAT LESSON OF THE FINANCIAL MELTDOWN of Asian autocracies is this: Freedom is indivisible. Economic freedom cannot exist without political freedom.

For decades, Asian dictators claimed that they had perfected a higher form of capitalism. Those in power would determine which entrepreneurs would succeed, and these—related by blood or bound by kickback to the politicians—would maintain position by perpetuating the dynasty.

The world was assured by such philosophers as Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew that a concern for individual liberty was merely a "decadent Western value," and that Asians had discovered that a one-party state with a strong ruler could better provide the stability for growth.

Western executives who hated the rigors of competition in a free market were pleased to invest in what seemed to be a sure-thing society. The greasing of government palms—without the scrutiny of a free press or the restraint of independent judiciaries—was advertised as a newly stable form of capitalism.

Growth-befuddled bureaucrats at the World Bank joined compilers of economic-freedom indexes to endorse such state-controlled commerce. They justified the secret dealing by peddling the notion that such license to do business among power elites would someday lead to political freedom.

It led to collapse. The waves of panic in Asia today, followed by despair and class resentment, show how wrong these fake capitalists were. The outstretched hand of local politics is no match for the invisible hand of the global market.

The dictatorial model, driven by mutual back-scratching of elites rather than a profit motive open to all, rewarded despotism and nepotism at the expense of efficiency and transparency. Now eyes are opening all over the world to the realization that the gravy train does not run on time.

Communism, socialism, fascism, and "crony capitalism" not only interfere with the free flow of capital to the best producer, but deny the consumer the right to decide which products succeed. Once again autocrats and their acolytes are learning that government's role in business is to protect competition in business.

The question about the shakeout in Asia is not whether its resourceful, democratizing nations will recover; they will. The question is whether the political leaders and crony capitalists of Russia and China will get the message, gained at such pain, that there can be no stable prosperity without political freedom.

*William Safire is a nationally syndicated columnist.* *© 1998* New York Times.



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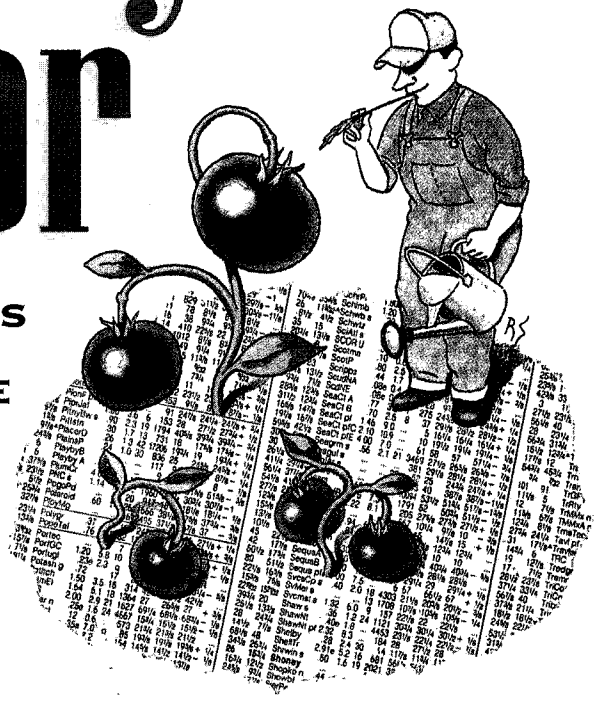
# From Beneficiary to Investor

## Why American politics is now ripe for Social Security and Medicare reform



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The time for fixing Social Security is here. The content of the reform is fairly clear—individual investment accounts to replace part of the government benefits financed by the payroll tax, later retirement ages, adjusted cost of living increases. The details are important and need to be worked out carefully, but the political and macroeconomic stars are in order. The only question is whether the political actors have the necessary skill and will.

The conventional wisdom has long been that Social Security is the third rail of American politics: touch it and you die. Political events from the 1940s through the 1980s provided plenty of support for this rule. But very recently things have changed, and now the third rail has shifted to the other side of the tracks. While as late as 1992 it was politically risky to propose any changes in Social Security, it is now politically risky *not* to propose fixes.

This shift was caused by two key changes, neither caused by government, and neither much noticed by most politicians. The first change was demographic, and the key year was 1993—the first year in which Americans turning 65 had not served in World War II. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, born in 1927, served in the war; Walter Mondale, born in 1928, did not. This was critical, because the bedrock of support for the existing Social Security system is the G.I. generation, which grew up in the Depression, served in World War II, and then went on (against everyone's expectations) to build prosperous post-war America. Greed is always a strong motive for political activism, but even stronger is a sense of moral entitlement, and the G.I. generation has a powerful sense of moral entitlement to Social Security and, since 1965, Medicare. These Americans felt they had been dealt a poor hand, played it well, and passed on a very much better one to the next generation. To threaten to take away the smallest portion of Social Security benefits was to arouse their undying wrath. Congressmen faced the outrage of so-called notch babies (G.I.-generation members born in 1917 and after) for years after Congress took away the higher-than-inflation cost of living adjustment which had been unwittingly written into the 1972 Social Security increase package.

Economically, the Social Security system was an amazingly good deal for the G.I.ers. Senator Alan Simpson used to tell complaining elders that the value of the payroll taxes they had paid during their earning years was only a small fraction of the total they would receive from their monthly checks. They

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BY MICHAEL BARONE



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paid him no heed. After all that they had been through and all they had accomplished, they felt entitled to anything they could get. If younger Americans had to pay much higher payroll taxes than they had had to pay, that was just fine. The 1972 increases were their great triumph, the product of a bidding war between Wilbur Mills and Richard Nixon, an alcoholic and a crook both running for President. Together they produced the doubled cost of living adjustment that overadjusted benefits for inflation just as America was about to enter the most inflationary decade of the twentieth century. It can be argued that this law and the unanticipated steep increase in Medicare spending were—more than the Reagan tax cuts or defense increases—the real cause of the 1983-93 budget deficits.

But every day, the G.I. generation becomes smaller. Today about one-quarter of Americans over 65 are younger than the G.I.s. These new post-G.I. elderly are from what William Strauss and Neal Howe, in *Generations,* call the Silent Generation. They do not remember much about the Depression; they did not serve in World War II; the escalator of post-war prosperity was already moving up when they stepped on. They do not have the sense of moral entitlement to Social Security benefits that the G.I.s have.

Meanwhile, the younger generations—baby boomers and Gen Xers—have come to realize that they are on the losing end of a Ponzi scheme. Their payroll taxes are high, and there is no way they are going to receive Social Security benefits comparable to their "contributions." If you ask a group of twentysomethings what they expect to get from Social Security, they laugh. They intuitively understand, without knowing the figures, that the ratio of workers to retirees is falling toward 2 to 1, and that the payroll tax will have to become even more steep than it is now in order to support current Social Security payments. As a matter of fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates the Social Security tax will have to jump from 12 percent to 18 percent over the next 30 years.

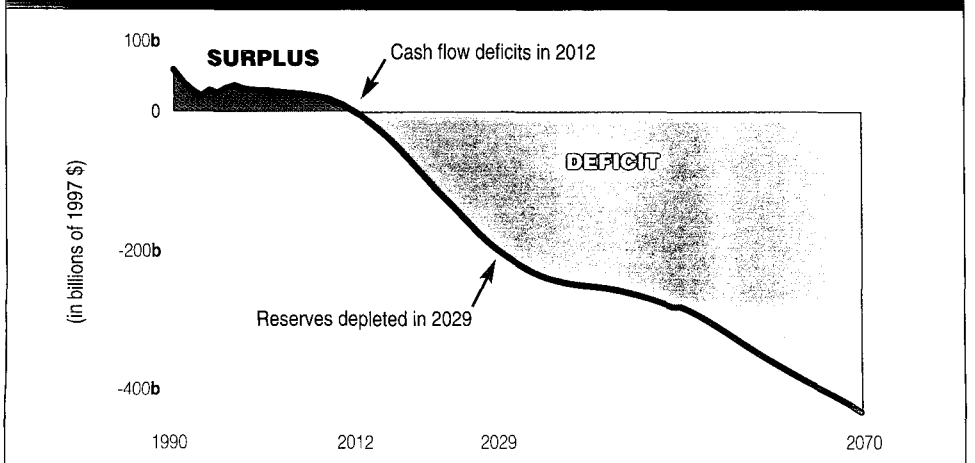
The twentysomethings know there is an alternative to that heavy blow. Which brings us to the second great change that makes Social Security reform foreseeable in the 1990s: the boom in investment. Pollster Peter Hart, in a survey for the National Association of Securities Dealers, reports that stock ownership has zoomed from 21 percent of adults in 1990 to 43 percent in early 1997. An NBC/*Wall Street Journal* survey conducted later in 1997 by Hart and Robert Teeter showed that 51 percent of respondents said they owned at least $5,000 in common stock or mutual funds, either individually or through a retirement savings program.

We are well on our way to becoming an investor nation. Americans have long had an interest in stocks through their pension plans; increasingly, those interests are direct, as employers shift from defined-benefit plans (in which a centralized entity does the investing and promises a specific pension) to defined-contribution plans (in which the employee invests his pension directly and the eventual returns depend on his own choices). In the 1970s and '80s, most individuals had the bulk of their wealth in residential housing; by 1997, most individuals have more wealth in stocks than houses.

Of course there is no guarantee that the current bull market will continue forever or that the gains investors have made in the 1990s are locked in. But over time, the stock market grows faster than incomes, as the investing public has come to understand. Harvard economist Martin Feldstein notes that while funds raised by the payroll tax have historically risen at about two percent a year, stocks rise by five to six percent a year over the long run. (This is a conservative estimate: Feldstein's average covers the years 1926-94, which means he includes the '20s stock market crash and the Depression, while leaving out the doubling of the market since the Republicans won control of the House in 1994.) It is increasingly becoming plain to Americans that they would do well to look more to stocks for a greater part of their post-retirement income and less to the payroll tax.

Some may doubt that voters make such long-range calculations. But there is increasing evidence that the economic factor most important to American voters is not short-term income but long-term wealth. The large majority of Americans do accumulate significant wealth, in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, over their lifetimes, as Federal Reserve data show. Journalists miss this because they focus on the aggregate figures for all Ameri-

## SOCIAL SECURITY'S PROJECTED CASH FLOW




**Note:** Annual OASDI cash-flow, excluding interest, in 1997 dollars (intermediate assumptions). **Source:** U.S. Social Security Administration.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) shocked his colleagues with his recent call for allowing workers to channel part of their Social Security taxes into personal savings accounts. On "Fox News Sunday" Brit Hume asked the senator, "What is it that gives you confidence that you can pull this off without being beaten up on it badly?"

Moynihan replied, "I'm past confidence in government. I just want to get through the day. But it's a crisis, you won't be sorry to hear, for liberalism. It's the liberals who can destroy Social Security by preventing any change."



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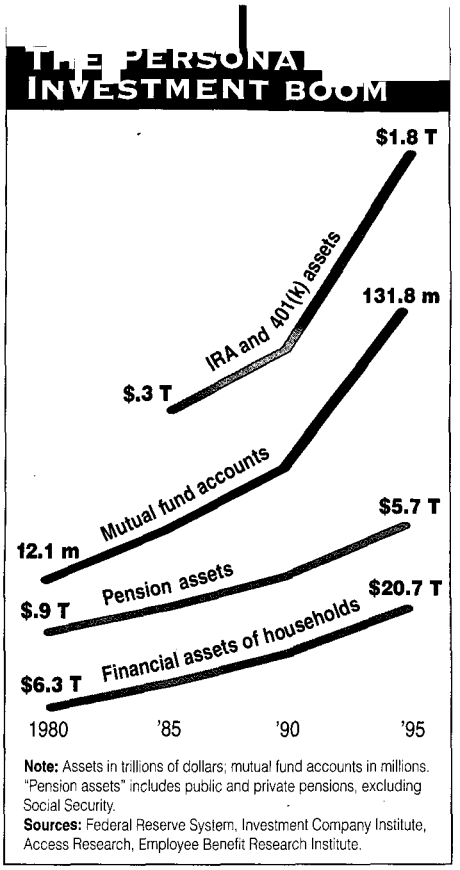
cans—which are skewed by the negative net worths young people typically have—rather than on the figures for people around the relevant age of 60, when wealth accumulation maximizes.

Voters of the G.I. generation were sensitive to small fluctuations in income. They remembered the 1930s, when a layoff was often the prelude to years of unemployment and economic ruin. But voters growing up in the age of credit cards and vast job growth, the America of the last 30 years, know that they can survive a period of temporary income loss. They are more concerned with how they are faring in their *lifetime* project of accumulating wealth.



**Note:** Assets in trillions of dollars; mutual fund accounts in millions. "Pension assets" includes public and private pensions, excluding Social Security.
**Sources:** Federal Reserve System, Investment Company Institute, Access Research, Employee Benefit Research Institute.

The focus on wealth rather than income helps to explain the otherwise puzzling responses of voters to economic events in the 1990s. The relatively small income losses of the 1990-91 recession are not enough to explain how George Bush fell from 53 percent of the vote in 1988 to 37 percent in 1992. But a look at where his greatest losses occurred tells the story: they were in New Hampshire and southern California, which also suffered the nation's biggest drops in housing values. Voters spurned him because they lost wealth and he didn't seem to be doing anything about it. As for 1994, the old political formulas based on macroeconomic indicators suggested the Democrats should have lost about a dozen House seats. Instead they lost 52, in part because their big government programs threatened wealth accumulation. And how to explain the current euphoric feeling about the direction of the nation, and Bill Clinton's high job ratings, amidst deepening political scandal? Income growth is lower than the peaks of the Reagan years, so that's not it. But look at the stock market, and the vast increases in wealth it has given millions of Americans—there's the source.

A final bit of evidence: the fizzling of the Medicare issue in the 1996 campaign, when Democrats hammered away at Republican "cuts" in Medicare (actually, the Republicans called for lower *increases* than projected). For months journalists reported, accurately, that these attacks were hurting Republicans. But at the beginning of October the Republicans counterattacked, and as Peter Hart has noted, the Democrats' Medicare advantage disappeared by the middle of the month. The Republican response—that Medicare was going broke, that Republicans were just proposing smaller increases, and that they had a "lockbox" to guarantee the savings went to Medicare—went mostly unreported, and even many Republicans still believed they had lost votes on the issue. But the exit polls tell another story. In a country with a vanishing G.I. generation and two younger generations skeptical that they will receive much from Medicare or Social Security, the Medicare issue was a wash. You could almost see the third rail flipping over.

So we now have an electorate ready for Social Security reform. Only a few politicians have stepped forward though, the first being junior Republicans like South Carolina's Mark Sanford and Michigan's Nick Smith. Then in January 1998 came Bill Clinton's opportunistic ploy to outflank tax cut proposals by calling for budget surpluses to be plowed into Social Security. That put the issue into play. Then in March, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) came forward with his own plan for cutting payroll taxes and allowing taxpayers to start personal investment accounts to supplement Social Security benefits. Moynihan wouldn't make the investment accounts mandatory, and he would raise the amount of income on which payroll taxes would be due—features the Republican Social Security reformers oppose. But the direction of movement is apparent. Suddenly American politicians are moving toward a system similar to those already working in Chile and Britain.

Will they get there any time soon? That is by no means clear. We have a President elected with 49 percent of the vote and beset by scandal, whose fellow Democrats in Congress may not be ready to follow him in this direction. We have a Republican House majority elected with 49 percent of the vote and still spooked by the public's adverse reaction to their stand in the 1995-96 budget showdown. Neither side may have the strength and confidence necessary to move ahead. Which would be unfortunate, because suddenly the money to pay for the costs of transition is at hand, in the form of a budget surplus.

In any case, the politicians don't have the excuse for hesitation that they had in the 1980s, when they claimed the public would not accept significant changes. Today, Social Security reform would merely reflect transformations in our citizenry. The generational shifts and investment boom of the '90s have changed the American people from beneficiaries worried about yearly income and relying on centralized experts running a welfare state to investors embarked on a lifetime project of accumulating wealth and relying on their own decisions in the marketplace. Social Security reform would transform a system that is lagging behind the people to one that works in tandem with their deepest priorities and principles.

## How to Save Social Security

Now that others are beginning to call for reform of Social Security, we remind readers that *The American Enterprise* devoted our entire Jan./Feb. 1997 issue to the topic. For a comprehensive explanation of what's wrong with Social Security and how to fix it (by converting to a system of personal retirement accounts), call 202-862-5870 and ask for a copy of that special issue. The cost is $6, which includes postage.



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# Transcript

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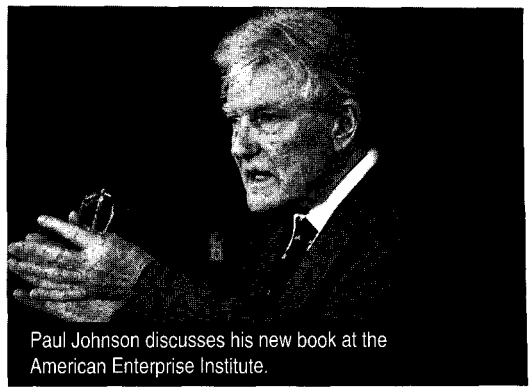

Paul Johnson discusses his new book at the American Enterprise Institute.

Bruce Ready Photography

## PAUL JOHNSON EXPLAINS AMERICA

*The British historian Paul Johnson, author of* Modern Times, A History of the Jews, Intellectuals, *and other works, has just written* A History of the American People. *Recently, he talked about the experience at an American Enterprise Institute Amgen Forum.*

Here are my Ten Commandments for writing a history of America. The first concerns geography. The United States is a big country with a huge variety of terrain. Until the coming of the internal combustion engine, especially the airplane, America had to contend with the tyranny of distance. The first settlers had no idea of what or who lay in the interior, and this ignorance was pretty well complete for the first 200 years. So the First Commandment is: Remember how big America is and how multifarious. You must always study American history with a large-scale atlas open beside you.

Second Commandment: Remember, America is and always has been a religious country. It was founded primarily for religious reasons. Religious belief and conflict was absolutely dominant until the end of the seventeenth century, and even after this point, the Great Awakenings were determining factors in what happened in America. The first Great Awakening, in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, was the spiritual and emotional engine of the American Revolution that brought the United States into being. The second Great Awakening, early in the nineteenth century, made the Civil War inevitable.

The Constitution and the Bill of Rights freed America from the political consequences of strong religious belief. To that extent, the United States is a secular state, but in all other respects America is a God-fearing country with all that implies. America is the only major country in the world in which a majority of citizens still voluntarily take part in an active religious life. That is the primary source of American exceptionalism.

Third Commandment: America is about freedom. The British went to America to make themselves freer than they were at home, in a religious as well as a political and economic sense. After arriving, they set up societies which were themselves restrictive, especially in New England, but America was too big for restrictive societies to long survive. Once Roger Williams broke away from Massachusetts and founded Rhode Island as a community where religious freedom prevailed, the pattern had been set. If Americans found themselves unfree in one colony, they moved on and founded another. Vastness, distance, and emptiness were the friends of American freedom. They confirmed it and made it invincible.

Fourth Commandment: America is about representative institutions and democracy. Both developed extraordinarily early. During the first two generations of the existence of the American colonies, the power of the state in England was too distant, weak, and preoccupied with other things to impose itself. So the early colonies were, to a great extent, self-governing, and most people participated in the process. By the time the Crown tried to reassert its power, it was too late. Representative institutions had taken root and were part of the ordinary texture of decision-making on the far side of the Atlantic. The American revolution was inevitable: It was only a matter of time.

However much the Founding Fathers sought to devise a government which was in the hands of an educated elite of gentleman farmers, the coming of a popular democracy was already written into the facts and into the documents, and it came swiftly. Despite anything you may read, America continues to be ruled by its people, not by big business or the lobbies or the parties.

Fifth Commandment: America is about law. The Pilgrim fathers signed a contract while they were still at sea, and formal contracts and constitutions made their appearance very early in American history, almost before the settlers learned to feed themselves. They saw themselves as a people under God's law, reflected and enacted in their own homemade laws. They rebelled against George III because they thought his ministers were subverting the law. The same principle applied when the Union fought the South and subdued it.

Sixth Commandment: America is an entrepreneurial country. The American colonies, unlike the Spanish colonies to the south, evaded the restrictions of the European mercantile system and learned to object forcibly to those they could not evade. The 13 colonies had the economic and entrepreneurial resources to defeat Britain. When the Constitution was written, the Founders may have thought they were creating a classic agricultural republic of educated farmers, like Cicero's Roman ideal, but it was too late. The country was industrializing and becoming capitalist.

From the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, both state governments and the federal government did their best to erect legislative fences to contain the natural exuberance of American market capitalism. All they have done is to make it more efficient and occasionally more humanitarian.

Seventh Commandment: Never underestimate the importance of education. In the seventeenth and eighteenth cen-



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turies, Americans paid more attention to higher education than we did in Britain, and their colleges were not overshadowed by the obscurantism of the medieval past. By 1800, with only a fraction of our population, America had more and, on the whole, better universities than Britain.

Eighth Commandment: Note the centrality of blending in American life. The melting pot began in the seventeenth century. The earlier ships tended to be from particular localities in England, but the second generation came from all over the country, and from then on Americans became accustomed to overcoming barriers of separateness, which in Europe were still high until the twentieth century.

By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, an able-bodied man could travel to New York for as little as five pounds in English currency, often for nothing at all, bringing his own food with him. He could disembark without papers or examination, qualify for citizenship in some states in as little as a year, and in five years acquire a 100-acre farm—enormous by European standards—simply by saving a laborer's wages. Nothing like that had ever happened before in world history.

Despite periodic restrictions on immigration, America continues to admit and absorb people from Asia, Latin America, a good many from Europe, on a staggering scale. The melting pot still works, despite the efforts of the ethnic lobbies and the federal government to inhibit it.

Ninth Commandment: Never underestimate the self-critical and self-correcting process continually at work in American governments and society. This springs partly from democracy, which by its nature is outspokenly critical of society as it exists; partly from capitalism, whose conditions of intense competitiveness make it self-corrective; and partly from the existence of an all-pervasive media.

America is a great problem-creating country but also a great problem-solving country. It created chattel slavery on a scale never before experienced in the world, but it solved it after much time, blood, sweat, and tears. It created a problem of state's rights and solved that, too. It created the problem of big government for itself and is in, I hope, the process of solving that now.

AMERICA IS THE ONLY MAJOR COUNTRY IN WHICH A MAJORITY STILL HAVE AN ACTIVE RELIGIOUS LIFE. THAT IS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM.

America moves at extraordinary speed. In the 40 years since I started to go to America regularly, I've seen damaged cities, like Baltimore and Denver and Boston, transformed. I've seen Washington deteriorate. I've seen the once beautiful coast of Southern California built over and suburbanized.

Tenth Commandment: Always remember America is about people. It is a land, of course—and what a land—but it is, above all, a people, the most varied amalgam of people of all races and cultures the world has ever seen.

In my book, I inevitably focus on the outstanding Americans, the leaders and innovators. You cannot weld together a people without leading them. America has been fortunate in its leaders. The Founders and their immediate predecessors constitute perhaps the most gifted group of statesmen in the history of the world, and to them is due much of the success of the great republican experiment. Over the past half century, the office has been well served, on balance, by men like Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and Ronald Reagan, and even some of its flawed incumbents, like Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, displayed powerful flashes of greatness.

It has been my good fortune as a journalist to cover events in which the United States presidency was closely involved, and thus to get glimpses of the chief executives at work. There was General Eisenhower, beautifully dressed in perfect uniforms and suits, sometimes a little snappy, but other times beatifically calm—a man who liked a very dry martini and who was once described to me by his Vice President, Richard Nixon, as "the most devious man I ever came across" (and who would be better judge of that than Mr. Nixon?).

John F. Kennedy I leave to the encapsulation of Harold Macmillan, who rushed over as British Prime Minister to see for himself soon after the new President and his brother, Robert, had moved into Washington. On his return, I asked Macmillan, as he settled in his accustomed place at the head of the table in the Beefsteak Club, "What was it like?" He whispered, "Rather like watching the Borgia brothers take over a respectable Northern Italian town."

LBJ seemed to me like an African elephant with huge flapping ears and uncertain temper who would propel himself towards you in his chair until his nose was only inches from your face. He hoped to inspire fear until, suddenly becoming human, he started to turn out his pockets, in which he kept an amazing collection of documents, including what seemed to be the records of his entire medical history, from which he sought to prove to you that his health was tiptop.

There was Mr. Nixon, whom I got to know well after his fall, who had a thirst for knowledge, especially history, I've never seen anywhere.

Then there was Mr. Reagan, a great and simple man, who demonstrated the huge power that the possession of a few clear ideas, which happen to be right, give to a statesman. The first time I met him he said to me, "Good to see you again, Paul." I liked his jokes, especially one which said, "I'm not too worried about the deficit. It's big enough to take care of itself." Well, it did, didn't it? Reagan's humor often enshrined truth.

Nor must I forget George Bush, whom I heard deliver a speech from notes when he was Vice President, and I ventured to tell him, "Mr. Bush, I think you ought always to have a speech scripted in full, but if you must extemporize, please never begin a sentence without knowing what your main verb is to be." He took this well, being a modest man, but then as Churchill said of Mr. Attlee, "He has a lot to be modest about."

I have not yet had the pleasure of getting to know Mr. Clinton. Well, after all, I'm male.



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# In Real Life

First-person America

## ANY TIME, ANY PLACE

By Ray Wisher

GULF COAST, FLORIDA—It was no big deal, just another night on patrol. My partner and I were in an unmarked car driving in a residential area late at night when we saw a Bronco-type truck go by in a hurry. It ran a stop sign and took off into the neighborhood. The back window was open as if somebody had just stuffed something into it. So we began to follow the truck. We passed by as it turned down a dead end street and pulled into a driveway a few blocks down. To make sure things were O.K., we drove down to the cul-de-sac to make sure the owner belonged there.

As we slowly cruised by, I looked to my right and to my horror saw a young white male with long hair running toward me out of the shadows. He had a small semi-automatic handgun in his right hand. The look on his face was wide-eyed rage. I watched as he approached my side of the car at a dead run, reaching over with his left hand to pull back the slide on a gun.

"The guy has a gun!" I yelled. I couldn't do anything but watch as the man ran within 20 feet and pointed the weapon at my head. I told myself there is no way this guy has a real gun. Nobody is that stupid; it must be some kind of pellet gun or something. I watched as the man, still running, stuck the gun at me and pulled the trigger three times. I heard "click, click, click."

Thinking he must be trying to scare us, I said, "it must be a pellet gun." Luckily my partner just slammed the accelerator to the floor and skidded into the cul-del-sac so we could end up facing the assailant. He hit the blue lights as we bailed out of the car, guns pulled. We yelled for the man to drop his weapon. As soon as he saw the lights he dropped the gun and threw up his hands: "I didn't know you were cops! I'm sorry."

Still thinking it had to be some kind of pellet pistol, I walked up and asked why he was trying to scare us like that. He said he thought he was being followed, but he couldn't tell us why someone would be following him.

I picked up the pistol and looked at it. To my surprise it was a .38. Then I pulled the slide back, half expecting to find it empty. Nobody would actually try to shoot someone they didn't know just because they were driving down the road in a car. But the gun wasn't empty; it was fully loaded. Seeing that the first round had jammed down, I ran the slide back twice. A round ejected nicely from the port. My blood ran cold.

That the gun hadn't gone off was sheer luck—or God's hand. Because the man hadn't pulled the slide back far enough to feed the bullet into the chamber, the round had stuck. Before the bullet I ejected hit the ground I looked at my partner and said, "cuff him."

He stuck the gun at me and pulled the trigger three times. I heard "click, click, click."

The man had no real criminal history, wasn't insane, wasn't on drugs, wasn't drunk. He had no reason for what he did. "I didn't know you were cops," he repeated. I told him that wasn't a good excuse. "What if we had been just some old lady, or a couple of people lost and trying to find an address. You can't just run out and start waving guns around."

"What an idiot," I thought as I hefted the blue steel pistol in one hand and the hollowpoint bullets in the other. Then the reality of what almost happened settled in—*what a pair of lucky cops.*

*Police detective Ray Wisher is a frequent contributor to* The American Enterprise.

## EIGHTEEN WHEELS FROM HELL

By Blake Hurst

WESTBORO, MISSOURI—Prejudice is the worst sin that late-90's man can commit. Well, maybe not quite as bad as smoking, but definitely one of the two deadly sins of the age. But I truly cannot control my prejudice toward truck-drivers. I try to be civil, and not prejudge, and some of my best friends are truck-drivers. I even spend a great deal of my own time driving a truck. But I still detest the incompetent road warriors who regularly attempt to deliver supplies to our greenhouse business.

This cancer on my otherwise easy-going and tolerant personality is reinforced every spring when the latest outrage is committed by some nincompoop behind the wheel of 80,000 pounds of steel, rubber, and greenhouse supplies, propelled by cigarettes, amphetamines, and total blind stupidity.

Several years ago a trucker called with a delivery. The gravel road I live on was icy, so I asked him to meet me in the nearest small town. The next thing I knew, he was parked in front of my house. He hadn't tied down the load, so I had several thousand small pots scattered across the back of a 50-foot trailer. We picked them up, unloaded the truck, and then the fun began. He couldn't climb the half-mile hill to the blacktop. No big surprise, that's why I wanted to meet him in



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town. He said, "have you got a spade? I was a combat engineer in the army, and I think I can dig my way to the top." And he could have, but I didn't want him around for the month it would have taken. I asked him to hold the excavating until I returned with a tractor and tow chain.

When we were hooked together, I told him to put the truck in low, let it idle, keep the chain tight, and let the tractor do the pulling. (I've been here before. In fact, some of the tensest moments in my normally tranquil marriage have been caused by the failure of my nearly perfect wife to understand the ballet that goes on between tower and towee.) I climbed into the tractor, engaged the clutch, and turned around. His wheels were spinning, black smoke was rolling out of both stacks, and I was in imminent danger of having a Peterbilt in my lap. I popped the clutch and headed up the hill in self-defense. He kept going faster. I kept going faster. We were in a race to the top, or a very expensive collision. Then he hit an icy spot and lost traction. I hit the end of the chain at 20 miles an hour with three-hundred horsepower. His

I HIT THE END OF THE CHAIN AT 20 MILES AN HOUR WITH THREE-HUNDRED HORSEPOWER.

bumper was the only casualty, besides my patience.

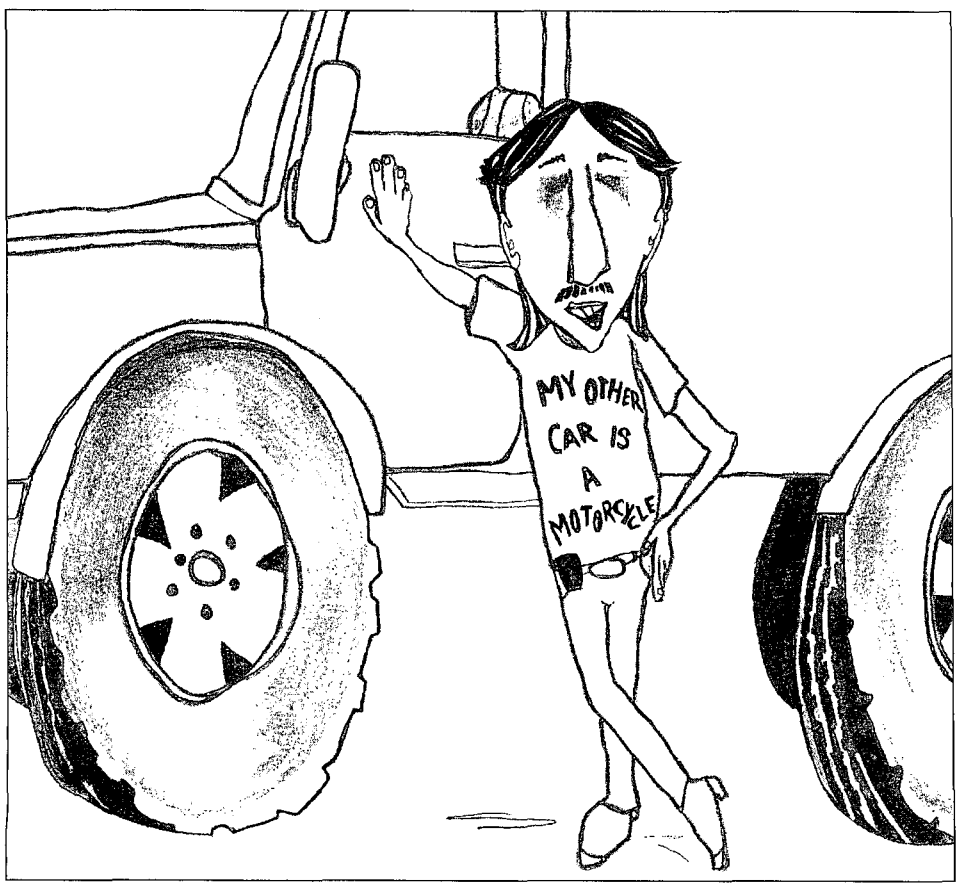
This spring has been no better. Julie (my wife, who lives for the days when I get stuck and she pulls me out) had ordered a new seeder for our greenhouse, along with some seed trays and potting soil. The trucker got stuck down the hill from our place. I went to get a tractor, but before I could return, he'd backed the trailer into the ditch and turned it over. We called two wreckers, one to set the trailer upright, and one to pull the truck up the hill. While we were waiting, I had a long conversation with the trucker. He was quitting his job the next day, and was fairly calm about how his supervisor would react when it came time to pay the wrecker bill. He showed me a picture of his girlfriend. She was smoking a very big cigar, and looked like she had had more than her share of life's troubles. But he was obviously crazy about her, and looked forward to getting off the road, and, as he said, "having a normal life." I encouraged him in his decision to look for other employment.

When we finally got him out of the ditch and opened up the trailer, my seeder wasn't there. Seems it had been shipped to California by mistake.

Truckers are personally responsible for much of the rise in the divorce rate. It's not uncommon to have a trucker show up here who decided to hit the road after his marriage had failed. One of the more competent drivers to arrive here was an Arkansas real estate developer in his former life. The savings and loan debacle had cost him his business and his marriage, and he lived in his truck.

Some of my deliveries are made by "no touch" drivers. That means they climb up in the cab and go to sleep while Julie and I unload the truck. Last year, I had two loads come in from one of those "no touch" companies. The first guy was young, and couldn't back into our driveway. We unloaded him in the middle of the road while he snoozed in the sleeper cab. The second driver was in his 60's, backed into our driveway on the first try, and helped wrestle the load to the back of the truck, despite the fact that he had recently had a hip replaced.

But he was the exception. And as the economy has improved, the quality of people who are willing to be away from home for weeks at a time driving a truck has dropped. Which leads me to postulate my own theory of the business cycle. Many economists use the money supply, inventory levels, and other leading economic indicators to make forecasts of the direction of the economy. But all they really have to do is check with businesses that depend on truck delivery. If present trends continue, the economy will grind to a halt because thousands of trucks will be lost, stuck in ditches, or jackknifed in the middle of huge, level parking lots.




*Blake Hurst is a regular* TAE *contributor who wishes his house was located on a rail spur.*



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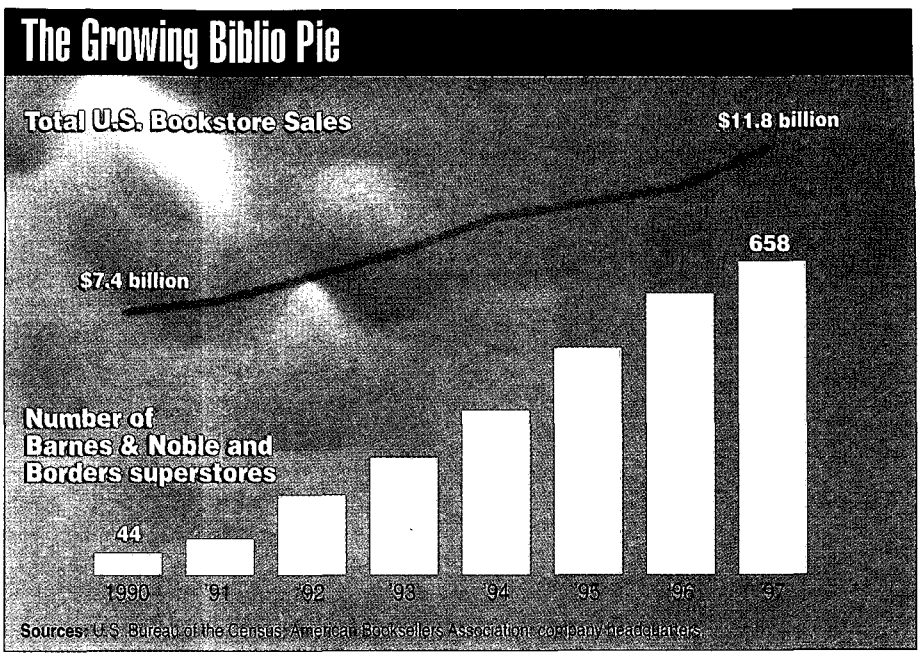
# A Real-life Test of the Beef Against National Bookstores

*By Eli Lehrer*




I still remember the black, white, and gold wrapping paper from Kroch and Brentano's. Secured with string rather than tape, a book from Kroch's seemed like a special present. Even if there was no occasion, my father would always have them wrap any book he bought for me. Kroch's was a Chicago tradition: a hometown operation that had existed for more than 40 years.

But not everything about the store was perfect. Locations were often dirty and many clerks seemed rude and unhelpful. Although some of the stores were pretty big, few of them made a serious effort to carry books from university or small presses. And now Kroch's is gone: its last Chicago-area location closed a few years back. The mega-bookstores—Borders, Barnes & Noble, Super Crown, and so forth—killed it off.

I no longer live in Chicago, but in upstate New York, where I'm finishing up a degree at Cornell. I'm a serious book consumer who reads everything from obscure fourteenth-century poems to Star Trek novels; so I spend a fair amount of time in book-selling establishments. There are ten of them in this college town, where interest in the printed word runs deep, and most do pretty well. But there are no chain superstores.

Whenever I return to Chicago to visit my parents, I stop by downtown Evanston (the Chicago suburb that's home to Northwestern University) and head straight for Borders. Usually, I can't resist walking away with at least two or three books. Evanston is also home to a Barnes & Noble and a Super Crown.

Recently, I've heard many complaints about how megastores are terrible for the book business. People I respect think the megastores are undesirable because they drive out "good" independent booksellers who actually care about the communities they serve. But I've noticed that the megastores have actually been good for Evanston. They've helped spark revitalization, drawing more business and foot traffic to a downtown that once seemed to have entered a slow downward slide.

Even for other booksellers, the megastores haven't been all bad. Specialty and used bookstores have actually seen business improve since the big boys moved in. It's true that general interest bookshops and smaller chain stores have disappeared in some areas. Nearly all of the stronger independents, however, have survived.

The megastores provide a level of service previously unknown in most of the locations they come to. They carry between 80,000 and 120,000 books each—more than a lot of public libraries, and about twice as many as the typical large independent or university bookstore. Some megastores also stock music and computer software. The megastores host regular book signings by authors, and children's story hours. They also carry slow-moving academic books that most independents won't touch, and heavily discount bestsellers and staff selections. Many independent mall-based "bookstores," meanwhile, now devote more space to greeting cards and calendars than they do to books.

The cafés at Borders and Barnes & Noble are pleasant gathering places. Pro-browsing policies turn the stores into locations where people can meet and relax without pressure to buy. I often see Northwestern students with their homework sprawled out in front of them at the Evanston megastores. Borders and Barnes & Noble maintain late hours and have encouraged some of downtown Evanston's other stores to do the same.

None of this impresses anti-megastore activists. After I wrote a column about the virtues of megastores



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in my New York daily newspaper, the owner of a local used bookstore wrote a response objecting that the megastores have become so influential they now dictate which books get published. There's no particular evidence, though, that the big stores have overall selling patterns much different from those of independent booksellers. Several publishers I talked to said they rarely see large differences between independents and megastores in book sales. To the extent there are divergences, they may be accounted for by the fact that Barnes & Noble and Borders both take pride in their willingness to open outlets in places that have never had serious bookstores before. Is it surprising that the latest study of Shakespeare's sonnets doesn't sell well in a Midwestern factory town?

Moreover, the megastores have actually created a much *larger* market for certain kinds of academic books. A number of academics have become rich in recent years writing for megabookstore customers. One of Cornell's better known professors admitted to me that he was writing a new book for "the Barnes & Noble crowd," and explained that "if I'm lucky, I'm going to pay off my summer house. Ten years ago, I would have sold 1,000 copies to libraries. Now, I might sell 10,000. I'm writing for the general public now and not for academics. I've actually had to learn to write." Hardly a negative trend.

Novelist Stephen King, who toured the country in 1994 promoting independent bookstores (and his latest bestseller), cited two alleged failings of the superstores: they don't stock enough books on subjects of local interest, and they fail to do enough to promote new authors. From my exposure to numerous Borders, Barnes & Noble, and SuperCrown stores, the first statement seems quite dubious. The Chicago-area superstores, for instance, all have well-stocked local-interest sections in the front. All have dozens of books about the history and culture of the city and its suburbs. At some locations, Barnes & Noble even segregates locally written *fiction*.

To test the friendliness of superstores to local-interest books, I recently decided to visit the Chicago-area megas looking for an obscure academic study of Irish community identity in turn-of-the-century Chicago. I knew the University of Kentucky Press had published the book late in 1996, and that it probably had a press run of under 1,000 copies. If the megastores would fail to stock any local-interest book, this would be it. Guess what? All the megastores had it in stock.

King's complaint about new authors doesn't stand up to testing either. Many Barnes & Noble stores actually have a special section for first and second novels. Borders has a "new fiction" section in the front of most of its stores that is full of works from recently debuted authors. Super Crown doesn't do quite as well on this front, but it does exceed my Cornell-area independent bookstores, where two out of three "new fiction" sections were almost entirely stocked with quick-moving books from established authors.

Critics often suggest the megastores are just profit machines where the sellers take little real interest in the printed word. Although one clerk at Super Crown seemed a bit slow on the uptake, all the other megastore clerks I spoke with in my recent test seemed to have a real interest in books. When asked for recommendations, most of the clerks came up with books from truly obscure authors. "This guy is really the very best Slovakian novelist," one clerk told me, his eyes gleaming. Another engaged me in a well-informed discussion of a rather obscure medieval poem.

A cartoon hanging in my favorite Cornell-area independent bookstore captures another criticism sometimes leveled at the megastores: It is said the nationals stock books based on ideology, and tend to keep out left-wing authors. It is difficult to check such an accusation but I tried.

First, I compiled a list of 20 important left-wing books: Noam Chomsky, Karl Marx, and Howard Zinn all made the list more than once. I also threw in many of the books from a left-leaning cultural studies class I had taken at Cornell. No store had everything (one book on my list is out of print). But two out of three megastores I visited had more of the left-wing books than found in *all* of the independent bookstores I checked. An employee at Borders had even put two of the books on my list on the "staff selection" discount table.

Then I made a companion search for right-wing books, based on a list that featured Edmund Burke, Charles Murray, and F. A. Hayek. This had even more interesting results. The megastores had about the same batting average as with the left-wing texts: stocking around 15 of the 20 books each. Meanwhile, the independent bookstores I visited nearly struck out—one didn't have *anything* from the list, another had three books out of 20, and a third had four. (These independents sit in a liberal college town, but then so do the megas I visited in Evanston.) So much for the idea of broad-minded indies and censorious megas.

On the whole, the megastores vastly improve the market for books wherever they arrive. Personally, I can't wait until one comes to my hometown. I'll be out in front of the welcome wagon.

*Eli Lehrer is completing a degree in English/medieval studies at Cornell.*

*Perhaps Sallie had made her bookshop too comfortable.*

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the Agricultural Economist

# Escaping a Dairyman's Dilemma

*By Gerard Bourgeois*

My wife Doris and I have been in the dairy business for 41 years. We currently run a 125-cow farm which we started on the slimmest of shoestrings. I had just finished three years in the infantry and she had completed business college; neither of us was from a farm family. It has been a wonderful life. Material prosperity has been modest, but those other and more important blessings have been abundant. Doris was home as the children grew up, and the first word as they returned from school was always "Mom."

Over the span of my work life, our society has become increasingly politicized. Unfortunately the dairy industry has been a pace-setter in attempting to fix problems through politics. Government programs have always been undertaken with the intention of saving family farms, but any serious study of their dismal results verifies what Ludwig von Mises found in his many economic studies: political entry into economic activities usually brings results opposite to what was intended.

During the period between the world wars, unionism and socialism became powerful forces in America, including among U.S. farmers. The first by-product of this in the dairy sector was the setting up of government "marketing orders." These were designed primarily to protect dairymen in the Northeastern states from competition with the super-efficient dairymen in the upper Midwest. This eventually resulted in a scheme whereby milk produced for fresh drinking (now about 40 percent of all milk) had its price pegged at an artificially high level depending on how far from Eau Claire, Wisconsin (the epicenter of America's dairy heartland), the producer was located. It apparently crossed no one's mind that areas even farther from Eau Claire than the northeastern farmers who the system was supposed to shelter would, under this law, benefit from even higher price bonuses for their milk. The end result has been to encourage dairy farming in all sorts of places where it makes little sense economically (like Florida), artificially increasing competition and distorting markets, and harming natural dairying regions rather than helping them.

Soon the excess production that this system brought in its wake had the effect of decreasing prices. So further political pressure was brought to bear and a federal price support program was begun in 1948. This resulted in surplus milk production being purchased by taxpayers through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) in the form of butter, cheese, and powdered milk. To make matters worse, processors of dairy products were guaranteed a profit through a "make allowance program," so we ended up with a system in which companies processing a product in national surplus had an incentive to process as much more of it as possible.

While all this was happening, an additional, even more asinine government program called "parity" was doing great damage to numerous sectors of U.S. agriculture, including dairy. The parity concept was imported from Germany, and it basically attempted to decree that U.S. agriculture be forever in the same position relative to the rest of the economy as it was in the period from 1910 to 1914. When the Agriculture Department tried to manipulate commodity prices according to this terribly flawed concept, it was soon overwhelmed with surpluses of all the farm commodities being "managed." Caves were full of dairy products, and rented ships sat at anchor packed with grain. Embarrassed by the waste and cost involved, Congress tried to correct the situation by lowering the parity percentage, and thereby the price, of the surplus products. This was always followed by protests from



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the farmers involved, and heavy campaign contributions aimed at purchasing favorable special interest legislation.

In recent years the dairy industry has been saddled with the Dairy Diversion program (which paid dairymen to not produce), and the Whole Herd Buyout program (which sent farmers checks in return for slaughtering their dairy cows for beef). This had little effect on milk production, but did generate many unhappy beef producers, as increased supply made beef prices tumble.

The steady march of new technology and improved production practices (plus some favorable weather of late) has made dairy farmers ever more productive, and in 1997 the increased output caused prices to decline about 12 percent nationwide. Since Congress has been trying to rid itself of the constant dairy problem, deaf ears have been turned to the industry. Once a group has become dependent on government, though, ingenious programs for keeping the funds flowing spring up like weeds.

The newest fad, which so far operates only in New England, is the area cartel. Since the word "cartel" has negative repercussions for most people, this one is euphemistically called a "compact," but it operates like any classic cartel. In the New England states that have imposed legislation, prices are arbitrarily set at a level higher than even the current politically manipulated milk prices.

Today great pressure is being brought to bear on the New York legislature to include my home state in the cartel. Since New York is the third largest dairy state in the U.S., the consequences would be significant. Whatever the short-term effects, the eventual result of setting our milk prices above the market price will be to lower consumption of fresh milk. As a result, we farmers will have to sell more of our milk to manufacturers instead. Since prices paid for manufacturing milk are substantially lower than prices for fresh drinking milk, we will actually end up selling more of our product at an inferior price. Yet at the same time we'll be alienating consumers with higher grocery-store costs that they'll know are the result of price fixing by political special interests.

Though it is being sold as a measure to benefit small family farms like mine, the ultimate effect of this attempt at government price fixing will be to hand politically generated profits to large, efficient farms. They will use these profits to further expand production. And then we'll be right back where we are today, with even more distortions.

UNFORTUNATELY THE DAIRY INDUSTRY HAS BEEN A PACESETTER IN ATTEMPTING TO FIX PROBLEMS THROUGH POLITICS. GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN UNDERTAKEN WITH THE INTENTION OF SAVING FAMILY FARMS, BUT THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN THE OPPOSITE.

I've recently proposed to state agriculture officials and politicians an alternative to this madness. My plan does something no other dairy plan ever has. It recognizes that 50 years of government "help" for the small family dairy farmer has helped put most of them out of business. It suggests a new direction, in which the government leaves pricing to the market.

If sympathetic citizens and legislators want to do something to help dairy farmers escape the mess that decades of meddling have made of their industry, they should institute something like my very simple COP program. COP stands for Certificate of Production. At a set date, each current dairy producer would be given a Certificate of Production representing the amount of milk his farm currently sells. This represents his market share. These certificates would be the property of each dairy owner.

Should a farmer wish to decrease or stop production, he could sell his certificates to the highest bidder, a far better option than leaving the business through bankruptcy, as is now often the alternative. The buyer of his market share would pay whatever the market said it was worth. He could be a neighboring farmer, or perhaps a bond trader or futures-market investor. The latter would bring new financing into agriculture and spread the risks inherent in farming more broadly across the economy.

There would be no government involvement in the trading of certificates. Any dairyman wishing to expand production would be obligated to purchase certificates to cover that increased production. He would be purchasing market share, and that would be a legitimate business expense in a situation like this where Congress has distorted markets for more than fifty years.

From the inauguration of the COP program onward, the only USDA dairy responsibilities would be in the areas of health, labeling, and truth in advertising, and policing the purchase of COP market shares by those expanding dairymen. No more thousand-page rulebooks. No more micromanaging of surpluses and prices.

This system would be far superior to the quota systems in Europe and Canada, which result in high consumer prices, declining milk consumption, and shrinking markets. The price of dairy products under the COP program would be set entirely by supply and demand.

It would be nice to avoid even the modest amount of regulatory finagling that my COP program would require. But dairymen are suffering from two generations of bad public policy that distorted their markets in ways that were no fault of their own. A COP-style program would give them a welcome choice of either competing in a fair and market-balanced industry, or else leaving dairying to those who do it better, with a retirement payment of whatever open trading determines their market share to be worth.

*Gerard Bourgeois and his son run a farm in Morris, New York.*



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# Flashback

TO KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT HAPPENED
BEFORE YOU WERE BORN
IS TO REMAIN EVER A CHILD—*Cicero*

# The Un-American Game

Americans do not speak Esperanto or measure in meters, but a third insidious agent of homogenization—soccer—is making alarming headway among our youth. Patriots, arm thyselves with baseball bats.

Teams of savages have kicked balls (or enemies' skulls) toward goals since time began, but the English codified soccer in the mid-nineteenth century. The game then was spread throughout the world by British tradesmen, soldiers, missionaries, and imperialists. In India, Egypt, Korea, South Africa, and elsewhere, soccer was taken up by local elites eager to mimic the Brits. Indigenous games fell before the sinister black-and-white ball. Soccer, as sports historian Bill Murray writes, was the British Empire's "most enduring export." The fabled "sport of the dispossessed," as P.C. apologists call it for its popularity in the Third World, is in fact a legacy of British imperialism.

In the Middle East, the game was introduced by British oil workers. The Shah of Iran pushed it as a tool of westernization. The Boer War established the game in South Africa, where, some years earlier, hundreds of Zulus had quite sensibly ripped a soccer ball to shreds after watching British sailors play a game.

Yet the virus never infected Americans. Soccer was played in a few immigrant-heavy New England textile towns in the nineteenth century, but the sons of these immigrants learned to play wholesome American sports such as baseball and real football. In 1924, Thomas Cahill, secretary of the U.S. Football Association, predicted that his European game soon would "rank only second to baseball as the leading pro game," but Americans remained so indifferent that Cahill's association eventually gave up its preferred name and accepted the demeaning term "soccer."

Why did soccer fail in our land? Setting aside the obvious fact that it is an excruciating bore, the usual explanation is its foreignness. Local clubs of the 1930s and '40s had such unlovely monikers as the Chicago Croatians and the San Pedro Yugoslavians. Not exactly the Yankees. Even today, prominent "American" players are often foreign mercenaries or the pony-tailed sons of college professors.

In 1943, *Time* asserted that the "U.S. lack of interest [in soccer] is due mainly to U.S. distaste for sitting outdoors in wintry winds and sleet," which does not explain why Green Bay's Lambeau Field and Buffalo's Rich Stadium are packed on December Sundays.

In 1952, the secretary of the National Federation of Secondary Schools ventured, "It's hard to interest American kids in a sport in which they can't use their hands." Why Americans should be more attached to their hands than other people he did not explain.

Two U.S. professional leagues were launched in 1967. Fewer than one percent of the players in the larger of the two leagues were American; teams sent their players and coaches to Berlitz classes to learn English, but their efforts were for naught. CBS actually broadcast several games, but the handful of fans were aghast when it was revealed that players had been instructed to feign injuries in order to make time for commercials.

The North American Soccer League prospered for a mayfly's life in the 1970s, thanks largely to the aptly named Cosmos team of New York City (actually New Jersey), which featured the legendary Brazilian Pelé. The likes of Elton John and Henry Kissinger promoted the NASL, but provincials snubbed the cosmopolitan sport. As one Tulsa cabbie told a reporter when asked why he didn't follow the NASL's Tulsa Roughnecks: soccer is for guys "in short pants, a Communist game, too slow and boring."

World Cup 94, the first soccer championship played on American soil, was a colossal flop, despite the corporate subsidies lavished by Coca-Cola, Mastercard, and the usual suspects. The title game, a thrilling 0-0 tie in regulation between Brazil and Italy, did not win millions of new fans.

Today, Washington, D.C. consultants imagine that American roadways are filled with sport utility vehicles driven by harried lawyer-moms carting the kids to soccer practice. Not where I live. Admittedly—and distressingly—more and more kids are playing organized soccer. But on the gloriously disorganized playgrounds, baseball, basketball, and real football still reign—for now.

Still, it can't be denied that soccer has gained a toehold in this country that was the first to expel the Brits. So now is the time for all good sports to come to the aid of their country: Blissfully ignore World Cup 98, and reintroduce your children to the distinctly hands-on American game of baseball.

—Bill Kauffman



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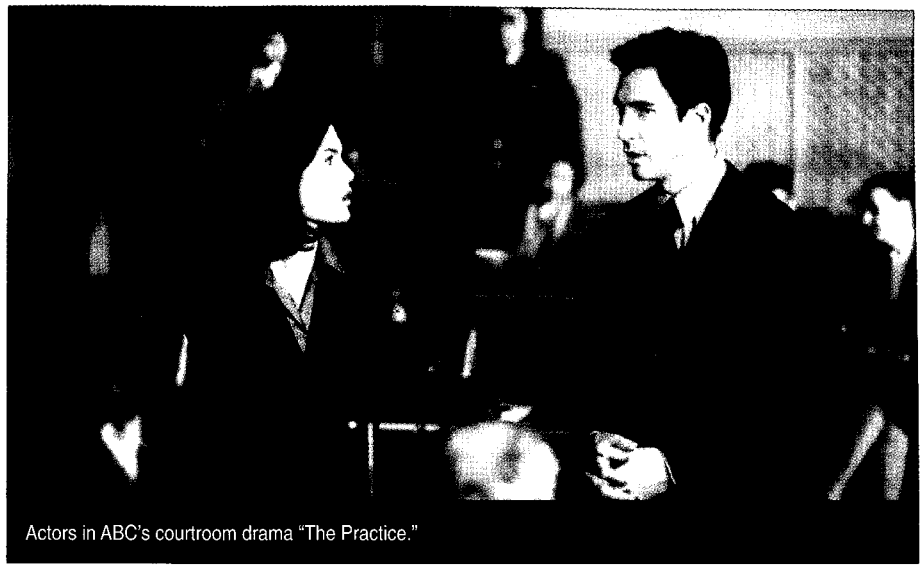
# Who Loves Lawyers?



Actors in ABC's courtroom drama "The Practice."

©1998 ABC, Inc. Photographer: Jerry Fitzgerald

"Suddenly, everyone loves lawyers." That's how ABC advertises its prime-time drama series "The Practice," set in a Boston law firm. No less than half-a-dozen prime-time shows currently feature attorneys, with numerous projects about lawyers in development.

Yet nobody outside of Hollywood loves lawyers: Polls consistently show that Americans rank lawyers *lower than any other group in society,* including the press and politicians.

So why does Hollywood forge ahead? Simple: In Hollywood's eyes, America is a nation of victims in need of saviors, and the crusading attorney is the latest messiah. Previous candidates for the job have included environmental activists *(On Deadly Ground),* crusading journalists *(All the President's Men),* union organizers *(Norma Rae),* along with Vietnam War protesters, easy-riding hippies, and a host of other progressive saints.

Producers and writers are always looking for characters who will right what they see as America's wrongs. Take one of the most popular targets for lawyers nowadays, in Hollywood and real life: the tobacco company. One recent episode of "The Practice" pits an idealistic criminal defense lawyer against her former law professor.

The one-time teacher has compromised his principles by going to work for a firm that represents tobacco companies, and his former student has decided to sue him because he won't release research useful to her tobacco case. There's no doubt who stands on the higher moral ground: "My firm," she informs him, "defends murderers and drug dealers on the theory that despite the crime, everybody gets his day in court. But we never, ever, facilitate murder, Professor. We never help people kill [like you do]."

No hint that legal attacks on tobacco companies, obstetricians, fast food outlets, breast implant manufacturers, and other favorite suit targets might be motivated by the lawyers' 40 percent cut of multi-million dollar awards.

Today's Hollywood lawyers are champions of the little guy. The only bad lawyers tend to be those representing corporations. A classic case is on display in *The Rainmaker,* based on the John Grisham novel. The most venal characters are the executives and lawyers associated with a large insurance company that refuses to pay its claims. The movie's ambulance-chasing lawyers, on the other hand, are charming rogues whose questionable tactics are played for laughs. Director Francis Ford Coppola was clearly a man on a mission, out to show, he admits, "how all wealth really comes off the backs of the poor, the Marxist theory about the exploitation of labor."

Even though TV ratings and movie box office receipts have been lukewarm, Hollywood's enthusiasm for such fare continues unabated. *A Civil Action,* scheduled for the fall, is produced by Robert Redford and stars John Travolta as a lawyer who sues on behalf of families who accuse W. R. Grace and Beatrice Foods of poisoning a Massachusetts water supply, causing death and injury to their children.

Then there's a project from "Miami Vice"-creator Michael Mann about the legal crusaders who went after the tobacco giant Brown & Williamson, as well as another adaptation of a John Grisham novel, *The Runaway Jury,* also about a tobacco suit. No doubt these pictures will be one of the few remaining places where Hollywood doesn't shy away from depicting unambiguous cases of good vs. evil.

Sometimes TV lawyers rally to noble causes besides tobacco. On one episode of "The Practice," a partner files suit against a carnival because a fat woman says the clown in the dunking booth insulted her weight. The attorney's closing argument—"I don't expect the bigotry to end with the wave of a wand. If we're going to stop it, we need a beginning, for somebody—one jury—to say that it's prejudice and isn't okay"—sounds as though it could have come from the great '60s civil rights cases. But here it is used to argue for what most Americans would consider a frivolous lawsuit. In the show, the jury buys it and awards $300,000 in damages to the fat lady.

Hollywood insists its new legal dramas are more realistic than the old "Perry Mason" and "Matlock"-type shows. As Dean Hargrove, who produced those two shows, told *TAE,* "There's certainly been a change in how they deal with lawyers."

—John Meroney



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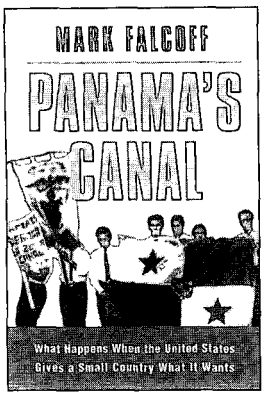


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**By Mark Falcoff**

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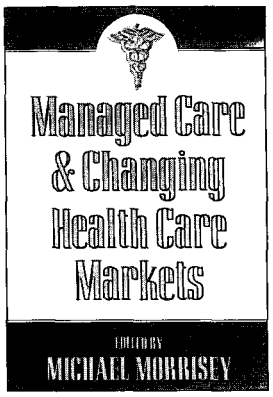


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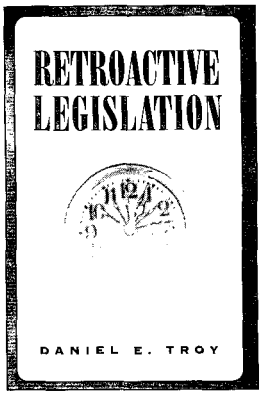


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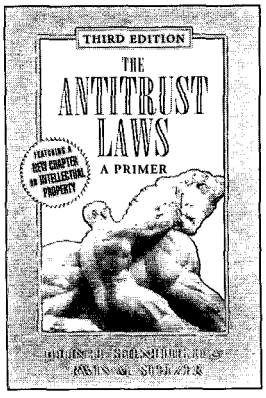


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# BookTalk

## SHAMELOT

By R.W. Bradford

*The Dark Side of Camelot*
*By Seymour Hersh*
*Little Brown, 498 pages, $26.95*

John F. Kennedy is surrounded by more myths than any other President. One reason, of course, is the sentimental reaction to the assassination of the handsome young leader. The popular tendency to see political leaders in heroic terms is another cause. But mostly, Kennedy's canonization is the product of a carefully crafted and very expensive public relations campaign that began nearly two decades before he became President and has lasted far beyond his death.

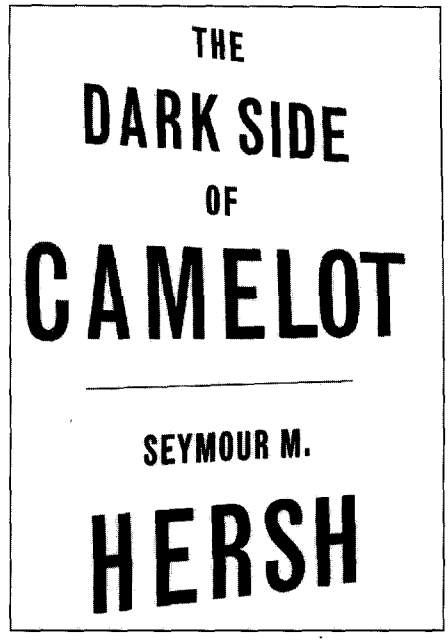
The JFK image was largely the work of his father Joseph P. Kennedy—a zillionaire business tycoon, corrupt politician, and movie mogul. It began in earnest the moment JFK 's older brother, Joe Jr., was killed in World War II, and papa Joe's presidential aspirations were passed on to JFK. Joseph Kennedy's career in Hollywood provided him with an understanding of how to conduct PR campaigns of the most sophisticated sort. And he had millions of dollars to spend on the effort. The campaign was conducted at a time when the press was more supine and less sophisticated than any time since. And the result was that no other politician has ever had such a wide divergence between public image and actual character as John F. Kennedy.

Seymour Hersh's *The Dark Side of Camelot* is an exploration of those aspects of JFK 's life that diverged most egregiously from his image, with particular attention to how his perverse character traits impinged on his political actions. What emerges is not pretty. While there is no doubt that JFK was charming and intelligent, he was also vindictive, cruel, and reckless. He was a man who could—and did—acquiesce in the murder of an old friend (Ngo Dinh Diem, President of South Vietnam), plot the murder of heads of state (Fidel Castro and Rafael Trujillo), and engage in criminal activity with the Mafia (with one of whose chieftains he shared a mistress who conveniently transported satchels of cash from the campaign to the Mafia).

Kennedy ordered the Secret Service and other law enforcement officials to procure prostitutes for his pleasure, including an East German woman who had been a member of various Communist Party organizations. His sexual appetite was unbridled, and his behavior callous. In one particularly pathetic case, a young woman who had been involved with him for two years learned that he did not even know her name.

But Hersh gets into far more substantial matters than JFK 's orgiastic pool parties staged in the White House or at Bing Crosby's estate in Palm Springs. His account of the Cuban missile crisis is comprehensive and fascinating. The version we've all heard is that, upon discovering that the Soviets were setting up missile bases in Cuba a few days before the 1962 election, Kennedy faced down the Soviets with the risk of nuclear war. "We're eyeball to eyeball," Secretary of State Dean Rusk said in a phrase that has come to summarize the resolution of the crisis, "and I think the other guy just blinked."

Kennedy brought the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation, all right.




But he didn't force the missiles out as claimed. Soviet Premier Khrushchev wouldn't back down, so Kennedy secretly agreed to remove U.S. missiles from Turkey to get the weapons out of Cuba. It was imperative for JFK 's re-election—and the anticipated election and re-election of his brother Bobby—that this deal be kept secret so they could maintain their image as tough leaders. The result was that for the next 14 years, the men running the Soviet Union would have the means to publicly devastate the Kennedys at any juncture, simply by putting the lie to their claimed victory in the missile crisis. The President and his brother thus bargained their way out of a crisis by risking cataclysm and then setting themselves up for Soviet blackmail.

The Soviets weren't the only ones who were in a position to blackmail the Kennedys. Hersh builds convincing cases that at least two American political figures blackmailed JFK. He argues that J. Edgar Hoover's extensive files on Kennedy's sexual peccadillos and mob connections guaranteed him reappointment as head of the FBI, and that Lyndon Johnson forced his way onto the ticket in 1960 by threatening to reveal something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described by Hy Raskin, one of Kennedy's most trusted aides, as "so astonishing that if it had been revealed to me by anyone other than Jack or Bob, I would have had trouble accepting it." The Kennedys didn't take Johnson's squeezing lying down; the very day JFK was assassinated, a Kennedy-orchestrated campaign to expose LBJ's political corruption was coming to fruition with the testimony at a congressional hearing of an insurance agent from whom Johnson had extorted "gifts."

*The Dark Side of Camelot* is not a comprehensive inquiry into the life of John F. Kennedy; it is an account of how his character and obsessions affected his activities as President. Some critics have condemned it on grounds that Hersh is not a scholar. I, for one, am glad that he is not. Hersh is a reporter, and a good one. For *The Dark Side of Camelot* he followed hundreds of leads and sought out dozens of people who knew Kennedy. At least one of his sources—an individual who provided him with counterfeit documents purporting to spell out details of JFK 's relationship with Marilyn Monroe—turned out to be an outright fraud, but this episode didn't make it into the book, and, so far as I can tell, Hersh did an excellent job of separating wheat from chaff. He provides a wealth of detail that fills gaps. And he removes any doubts one might have about the portrait of Kennedy that emerges from earlier critical biographies like Victor Lasky's 1963 *JFK: The Man and the Myth* and Thomas Reeves' 1992 *A Question of Character*.

*R.W. Bradford is editor of* Liberty.

## THE MAESTRO DUNNIT

By Richard Kostelanetz

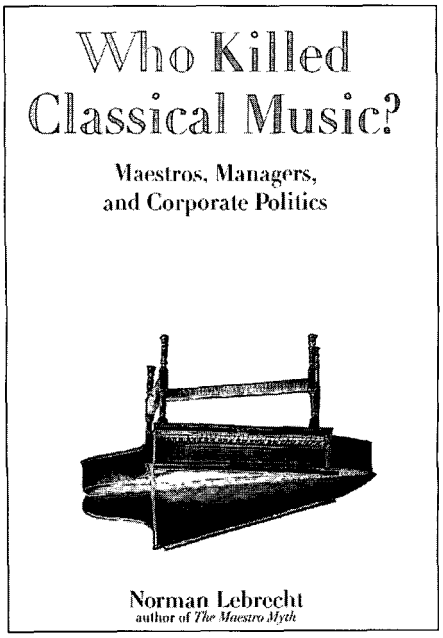
*Who Killed Classical Music?*
*By Norman Lebrecht*
*Birch Lane, 455 pages, $24.95*

Norman Lebrecht is a prolific young British writer who is a music columnist for *The Daily Telegraph* and author of several books. The inspiration of his best writing is not classical music per se but the music business. His latest book, *Who Killed Classical Music?*, is in my opinion the greatest book about the business of classical music since Virgil Thomson's *The State of Music* (1938).

Lebrecht's assumption is that no one really understands classical music unless he or she knows what stands between performers and listeners. And so he reveals what music managers do, how certain maestros exploit institutional power, what happens to record companies that are swallowed by conglomerates, how sheet-music publishers exert influence, and what motivates the promotion of records. Lebrecht names names and traces connections. His story of the decline of Columbia Records after the Sony takeover is classic business journalism.

Many earlier writers have lamented that Arthur Judson had a stranglehold on American classical performance between roughly 1920 and 1960, functioning as both the manager of the New York Philharmonic and the proprietor of a major performers' agency, Columbia Artists Management (As such, he was selling his own musician clients to a critical orchestra that he controlled.) No one, however, has written the Arthur Judson story so completely, down to its denouement. Eventually, Margaret Truman's 1948 complaint to her agent (who said tell your daddy the President) set legislative machinery in motion that resulted in pertinent anti-trust laws for the music industry.

The biggest villain in Lebrecht's history is not Judson or Walter Legge, a British record company chief who also owned an orchestra, but Herbert von Karajan. During the decades when he controlled publicly funded European orchestras like the Vienna Philharmonic and the Berlin Philharmonic, von Karajan ran up expenses with exceptional indulgence. Once he possessed orchestras he had them churn out discs, taking the vulture's share of royalties for himself and re-recording favorite pieces for every new technology (digital LPs, CDs, videotape, laserdisc) until he died. In addition to making it difficult for other conductors to record with his orchestras, von Karajan also drove up the prices that he (and thus other conductors) would be paid.




The reason for the impending death of classical music is that superstars, by monopolizing public attention and funds available for performance and record-company contracts, have shut out successors, creating a culture in which a few succeed brilliantly while everyone else declines. "There would be no more Kathleen Ferriers, Joan Sutherlands, or Jacqueline de Pres, because their nursery playground had been sold to developers and turned into a parking lot." You'll never listen to a von Karajan record again without hearing the sound of money clinking in the background.

Lebrecht's anxieties are entirely justified, but he doesn't see far enough to know that similar misfortunes are happening in the other arts: certainly in book publishing, probably in modern dance, perhaps in painting and sculpture. He writes, "Success, in music as in business, is a matter of timing, of being the right person in the right place at the right time. More cruelly than commerce, though, classical music only ever gives you one shot." This same one-shot principle accounts for why publishing promotion, and thus book reviewing, is so skewed toward people who have already written a single great book—to the detriment of new discoveries. Likewise, my neighbors in Manhattan's SoHo tell me that no visual artist ever becomes Big today unless his or her initial exhibition happens in one of only a few prominent galleries. In the one-shot world, too



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much cultural presence depends upon the efficacy of one's first fire.

Ironically, record companies often lose money on the stars they think essential. "When the accountants came to look at dollars and common sense, they found that the only individual [Leonard] Bernstein discs to make money were his Christmas specials, Tchaikovsky warhorses, and sentimental lollipops," Lebrecht writes. Given the same promotion, these records could have been made at a tenth of the cost with a hick conductor and Pomeranian orchestra and sold in equal numbers." The classical discs that really made money were the *surprise* best-sellers—such as, recently, *Chant* by some humble monks and Gorecki's Third Symphony, both of which were produced cheaply.

In his provocative conclusion, Lebrecht compares classical music to the business of sport, which likewise once depended mostly upon patronage by the wealthy but has since become more commercial. Just as record companies desperately need big-name stars, so do sports teams, even if the salaries paid these stars undermine both current financial health and the future prospects of a team. Lebrecht outlines a failure caused not by innocent idealism but by cynical miscalculation.

Anyone who thinks himself sophisticated about classical music will learn something significant from this richly detailed book. I certainly did.

*Richard Kostelanetz is author and editor of several books on music, and his compositions have been played around the world.*

## NO KEEPIN' 'EM ON THE FARM ONCE THEY'VE SEEN PARRIS

By John Hillen

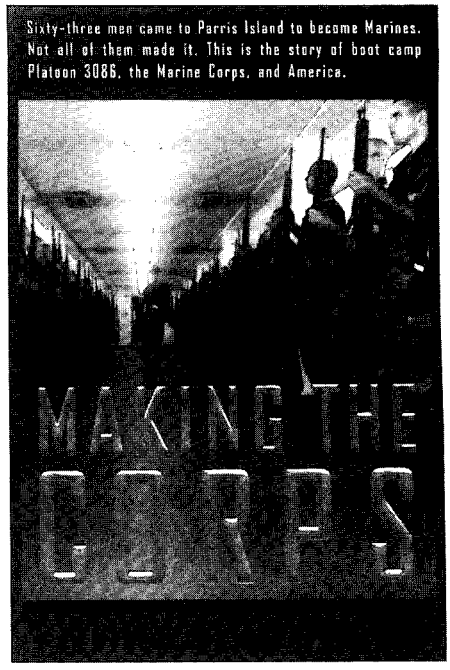
*Making the Corps*
*By Thomas E. Ricks*
*Scribner, 324 pages, $24*

Sara Lister's career-ending remarks labeling Marines "extremists" disconnected from the rest of society proved to be an invaluable gift for Thomas Ricks. Ricks, the *Wall Street Journal*'s Pentagon correspondent, had what every author needs to navigate the tricky shoals of non-fiction publishing: a news hook. It was as if a long-prepared manuscript on the ethics of fertility treatments hit the shelves just as the McCaughey septuplets were making their way into every living room in America.

Ricks, the emerging dean of a new generation of defense reporters, follows a platoon of Marine recruits through boot camp at Parris Island and back into the Corps. His straightforward premise makes for a rollicking good read: the transformation of Generation Xers from all strata of American life into "rough, tough, can't-get-enough" Marines. The Marine Corps, by virtue of being the only service not to compromise rigorous military standards, comes across smelling like a rose. Even *Parade*, which has been given to running cover stories on what Rosie O'Donnell can tell us about motherhood, excerpted this book under the title "What We Can Learn From Them."

"We" can learn from "them" precisely because becoming a Marine is a matter of morals, not military tactics or strategy. As Ricks writes in his introduction, "In a society that seems to have trouble transmitting values, the Marines stand out as a successful and healthy institution that unabashedly teaches values to the Beavises and Buttheads of America. It does an especially good job in dealing with the bottom half of American society, the side that isn't surfing into the twenty-first century on the breaking wave of Microsoft products."

The Marine Corps' culture is summed up by the "core values" that boot camp is meant to impart: honor, courage, commitment. Things not often stressed in a society that Marine Corps Commandant Charles Krulak has described as "disintegrating in many ways." Ricks insightfully recognizes that three months of basic training on Parris Island have very little to do with making a technically proficient warrior (almost all combat training happens after boot camp) and everything to do with a cultural transformation designed to turned slackers and hackers into leathernecks.




An identity, not an occupational designation, is being earned.

Ricks lets the drill instructors (D.I.s) and recruits spin the tale for him. My favorite barracks-life vignette is of one recruit who receives a constant stream of mail from an older brother (also a Marine) that has nothing in the envelopes, but is clearly marked on the outside with comments designed to inflame the instructors at mail-time ("Tell me again about that cute D.I. of yours"). Tough love, Marine Corps style. And it is no different for the separately trained female Marines (with female D.I.s). Sheer physical and mental toughness, uncompromised standards, and no points for just "trying your best" or being a victim buttress the virtues taught in boot camp. Fat recruits who don't make it cannot use the "size-ism" discrimination charge.

Ricks's trip through Parris Island is a powerful indictment of many other institutions in American society—especially public schools and parents. In an age of moral relativism, and a narcissistic American society steeped in victimization, individualism, and materialism, what other institutions are as unequivocal about their own ethos and hierarchy of values? As Ricks notes of his recruits, "Parris Island is the first place many of them encounter absolute





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and impersonal standards of right and wrong, of success and failure." As one Puerto Rican sergeant told him, "When they mess up at home, they don't get punished, they get 'explained.' The parents, the media, want to 'explain' everything. Here, you screw up, we stop you and penalize you immediately, before you forget it."

The book's "Us vs. Them" theme comes to a head when the recruits graduate and take home leave before moving on to their various assignments. Almost to a man, regardless of whether they are upper-class whites from Summit, New Jersey, black Muslims from southeast Washington, D.C., or poor whites from rural Pennsylvania, the new Marines hold their former friends and culture in contempt. Civilian society is "nasty, too much 'me-ness' and selfishness, lazy, undisciplined." Most can't wait to leave home and get back to the Corps (although many are then disillusioned that the rest of the Corps is not as structured and "motivated" as boot camp).

One wonders whether the Marine Corps can hold out against the onslaught of the Sara Listers who would dumb down its high moral standards. If American society goes slouching toward Gomorrah, the American military will be pressed to slouch along the same path. Witness Senator Trent Lott's plea for the Air Force to "get real" instead of prosecuting Lt. Kelly Flinn for a host of serious violations of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. Few Americans polled in the aftermath of that episode seemed to understand why the military sought to hold its officers to a higher code of conduct than that of society at large. It was almost as if most Americans thought that the military pursued concepts like duty, honor, courage, and commitment out of nostalgia—rather than as cultural necessities for an institution required to succeed under the unnatural stresses of war.

*John Hillen, an Army combat veteran, is the Olin Fellow for National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.*

## INSIDE THE UNDERCLASS

By Martin Morse Wooster

*The Corner: A Year in the Life of an Inner-city Neighborhood*
*By David Simon and Edward Burns*
*Broadway Books, 535 pages, $27.50*

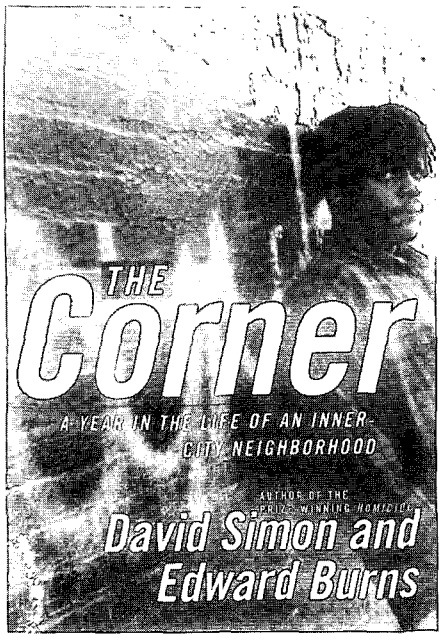
One of the reasons it's hard to create effective policies to help poor people advance is that far too many people have misguided notions about what the poor are like. Conservatives often think that a life on welfare is a loafer's paradise, fueled by a steady diet of malt liquor and soap operas. Liberals frequently contend that the poor are people just like themselves who are prevented from being productive by a heartless capitalism that simply denies them jobs.

If we're ever to move away from these stereotypes, we need reporters who will accurately show us what the lives of the poor are like. While flawed, *The Corner* provides many revealing glimpses into the poverty-stricken sections of one real city.

The authors are certainly qualified to write about urban life. David Simon is best known for his book *Homicide*, which is the basis of the popular police TV series. Edward Burns, a former police officer, has patrolled the streets of Baltimore for decades. Their book is an account of a year spent at the corner of Baltimore's Monroe and Fayette Streets, observing the people who deal drugs and commit crimes, and watching these characters change over time.

Simon and Burns have tried to write an epic of urban life, which views the changes in a great American city through the lens of one sleazy block. But it's far from clear that the corner of Monroe and Fayette accurately describes Baltimore. A friend of mine who has lived in Baltimore most of his life observes that the corner Simon and Burns chose is not particularly bad by Baltimore standards, since it is relatively far away from troubled public-housing complexes. He also argues that most parts of Baltimore, including many low-income neighborhoods, are far safer than the corner Simon and Burns describe.

Moreover, the authors periodically interrupt their narrative to deliver




opinions. They are vehemently opposed to the war on drugs, and favor retaining the existing welfare system. At least they present original arguments for their positions. They argue that crackdowns on illicit drugs distract police from solving murders or doing detective work, since it's much easier to arrest minor drug dealers than it is to conduct the investigations necessary to crack major crimes.

Nor is their support of welfare payments predictable. "Welfare is a bribe—and a fairly good one at that," Simon and Burns argue. "The best ideas and efforts of the welfare state buy us eight, or ten, or twelve days before the damned of the cities have to turn again to capers and hustles and crimes."

*The Corner* centers on the McCullough family, who have tumbled from virtue to vice in three generations. The grandfather, W. M. McCullough, worked hard and provided for his family. His son, Gary McCullough, initially was a successful investor, but his crack addiction has wiped out his fortune and his entrepreneurial initiative. He spends much of the book struggling to control his addictions and to succeed as a crab shucker. Gary's son, DeAndre, passes most of *The Corner* as a sullen teenager who wastes his days hanging out with unemployed and uneducated peers. By the end of the book, DeAndre has be-



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come a teenage father who has not married his teenage girlfriend.

*The Corner* is a nonfiction novel without a hero. Nearly everyone in the book accepts the degradation of their neighborhood. There are honorable exceptions, such as Ella Thompson, head of a local recreation center, who struggles to provide after-school activities for children despite repeated burglaries. But most of the people portrayed in the book either allow their neighborhood to rot or are contributing to the decay. Teachers lose sullen students who are unwilling to work. Social workers do little to help the poor get off welfare, and live in fear after a deranged man stabs a caseworker who denied him food stamps.

Most of the characters in *The Corner* have never left Baltimore and know little about life outside their neighborhood. A common belief among DeAndre McCullough's friends is that the largely white suburbs that ring Baltimore are populated by Ku Klux Klan members.

There will be few easy answers to the problems of America's inner cities. That much David Simon and Edward Burns show conclusively.

*Associate editor Martin Morse Wooster often writes about poverty and welfare.*

## Off The Shelf

A REGULAR REVIEW OF CLASSIC, OVER-LOOKED, NEWLY RELEVANT, OR OTHERWISE DESERVING OLDER BOOKS

## WHEN MEN WERE MEN

By Michael Platt

*Shane*
*By Jack Schaefer*

Sometimes taught in middle schools, Jack Schaefer's 1949 Western novella *Shane* (which inspired the classic movie) deserves mature respect as well.

Jack Schaefer handles words as accurately, cleanly, and thoughtfully as Shane does an axe, his fists, or his gun: "The smooth invitation of it tempted your grasp. I took hold and pulled the gun out of the holster. It came so easily that I could hardly believe it was there in my hand. Heavy like father's, it was somehow much easier to handle. You held it up to aiming level and it seemed to balance itself into your hand."

That "into" in "into your hand" is choice. And there is not a bad sentence in the book. The power of good writing in it is enough to blow away whole armies of the mediocre authors imposed upon college freshmen today.

There is also much to displease whiners: those who hate warriors, who think guns rather than criminals commit crimes, who wish for a world where virtue will be unnecessary. The story is clear that war is for the sake of peace, that warriors fight so that farmers may increase, and that disarming bad men is good.

The story is heroic, yet in *Shane* the hero doesn't win the girl, ride off into the sunset, and live happily ever after; his heroism means giving up the girl (who is married), and riding off into the night wounded, perhaps mortally. When I was a boy, seeing the movie, I found Jack Palance in black thrilling and Alan Ladd's killing him mighty satisfying. I did not realize there was a whole other drama in the story. Shane could have let Starrett go into town to be killed by gunfighter Stark Wilson. Then he could have enjoyed the love of Starrett's wife Marion. But Shane doesn't do that; instead he saves the husband, forgoes the wife, and kills the fastgun.

The story features a well-married couple and a good family, but instead of some vague approval of "family values," there is an exhibition of the self-restraint and self-sacrifice, the saying no to pleasure, that marriage may require. Starrett sees that Shane is a superior man. He rejoices Marion will have a good husband and his son a good father if he should be killed. Respect, not envy, is what he feels. Marion, too. She admires Shane, she cares for him terribly, but there is not one kiss in which she betrays her vows. No one in *Shane* offers the excuses most people nowadays would try on Dr. Laura Schlessinger.

It turns out not to be easy for a boy to "honor your father and mother," even if you are a good boy of a good dad. What if the hired man is simply a naturally better human than your own father? Of course you will fall in love with him. But is that not disloyal? Thus Bob, the boy, is painfully divided to see Shane and his father fight it out for the honor of facing Wilson, the hired gun the big rancher Fletcher has brought in to scare off the small landholders.

*Shane* is an American story. In Joe Starrett we have the civil hero, the man whose decency unto death serves his family. And in Shane we have the super-civil hero whose courage serves the good of *all* families, unto the sacrifice of family life, and even continued existence, for himself. Starrett and his virtues represent the civil best of America, but Shane and his virtues represent something that is necessary for our preservation in perilous times.

*Michael Platt lives in East Wallingford, Vermont.*



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# the Digest

SUMMARIES OF IMPORTANT NEW RESEARCH FROM THE NATION'S UNIVERSITIES, THINK TANKS, AND INVESTIGATIVE PUBLICATIONS

## POLITICS

### Still Growing and Growing

*Jonathan Walters, "Did Somebody Say Downsizing?" in* Governing *(February 1998), 1100 Connecticut Avenue N.W. #1300, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

In 1994, Republican governors across America were elected or re-elected on platforms of shrinking government. But once in office, these governors have reneged on their promises, notes Jonathan Walters of *Governing*. Governor George Pataki has managed to reduce New York's payroll by 5.2 percent during his tenure, but all other governors have steadily increased the number of bureaucrats working for them. In California, for example, Governor Pete Wilson (R) initially eliminated two state commissions and cut middle management by 10 percent. Since 1990, however, California state government has expanded by six percent. In his successful 1994 bid for governor, George W. Bush vowed to cut Texas's payroll, yet it has grown by 15 percent. Utah's government has grown by 23 percent in the '90s, with the largest increases in the state's prisons and the Department of Motor Vehicles. Schools are another growth bureaucracy in many states.

In addition, some governors have expanded the size and scope of government without increasing their official bureaucracy—by hiring private contractors who aren't counted as state employees. In Georgia, for example, Governor Zell Miller (D) recently launched a program providing pre-kindergarten activities for 100,000 four-year-olds. But because the state is paying local public schools and private contractors to run the program, "Miller can legitimately boast that the state isn't adding staff to handle the big job."

### The Lessons of Edmund Burke

*John R. Bolton, "The Prudent Irishman: Edmund Burke's Realism," in* The National Interest *(Winter 1997/98), 1112 16th Street N.W. #540, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Now that the Cold War is over, what should America's role in the world be? Some argue that America should embrace isolationism while others call for the U.S. to establish democracies worldwide. Still others, including John Bolton of the American Enterprise Institute, argue that realism not idealism is in order. Bolton believes the best guide to a realist foreign policy is Edmund Burke, the great eighteenth-century politician and author. The lessons Burke can teach include "his reliance on the accretion of experience and reasoning from empirical reality, his abhorrence of elevating abstract principles into a theology, and his fear of driving policy on the basis of metaphysics."

Burke was a consistent foe of ideologues. For example, he opposed the French revolution precisely because he feared the French wanted to impose their totalitarian beliefs on the world. The battle between England and France, was "a war between the partisans of the ancient civil, moral, and political order of Europe against a sect of fanatical and ambitious atheists aiming at universal empire, and beginning with the conquest of France."

Burke's distaste for extreme ideology was not limited to the French. One reason he favored giving America as much independence as possible was that he opposed the notion that King George III had a right to rule arbitrarily. On the other hand, though Burke agreed with Americans that they were overtaxed, he disagreed when they contended that they had an absolute right to liberty. "Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found," Burke wrote.

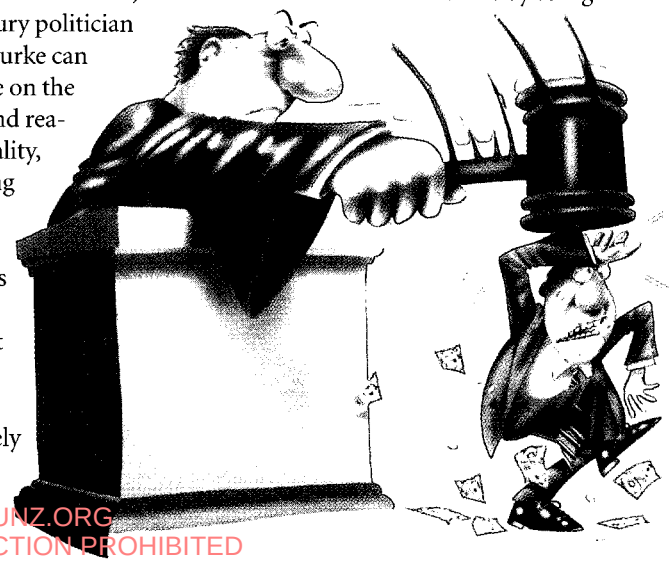
With the collapse of Communism, we live in an age where ideologies are less important than in the past. Studying Burke, Bolton suggests, will teach diplomats and statesmen not to rely on "abstract principles and absolute rights" in their efforts to tame foes and persuade allies.

## ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

### Trial Lawyers are Evil, Part 742

*Lawrence W. Schonbrun, "The Class-action Con Game," in* Regulation *(Fall 1997), Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.*

As recent lawsuits against the tobacco industry show, class-action lawyers can make millions of dollars by suing





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corporations. Lawrence Schonbrun argues that the tobacco suits are not exceptional. Businesses are being sued for a wide variety of alleged problems—and lawyers, not consumers, tend to be the primary beneficiaries.

Much of the time, consumers win surprisingly little in class-action suits. A 1993 suit in Alabama courts found the Bank of Boston guilty of charging escrow accounts excessively for insurance and other fees. The courts awarded $2.19 to any Bank of Boston account holder who qualified—yet allowed the bank to charge customers for attorneys' fees. The result: the bank charged customers $91.33 for a $2.19 credit.

Class-action lawsuits are an inefficient way to transfer wealth from corporations to consumers because the process of awarding a claim is cumbersome. Only 5-10 percent of every dollar in class-action damages ends up in consumers' pockets, according to the Law and Economics Consulting Group. The remainder goes to trial lawyers (who can collect as much as a third of the settlement in contingency fees) or is returned to defendants.

To stop the proliferation of class-action suits, Schonbrun suggests permitting trial lawyers only to sue on behalf of plaintiffs who agree to be part of the suit. This rule (which was U.S. law until 1966) would prevent attorneys from having "the ability to sue on behalf of limitless numbers of unknown persons."

### The High-tech Pork Barrel

*Scott Wallsten, "Can Government-Industry R & D Programs Increase Private R & D? The Case of the Small Business Innovation Research Program." Department of Economics, Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305.*

Advocates of government subsidies to corporations like to point to the Small Business Innovation Research program as an example of government successfully spurring high-tech innovation. Founded in 1991, the program now dispenses over $1 billion a year. But Scott Wallsten, a Stanford economist, argues the program funds research that firms would undertake *without* federal support.

Wallsten examined 216 of the program's grant recipients as well as 55 companies that were rejected for grants. He found that successful applicants tended to be larger companies with more employees than firms who were denied grants. Successful firms were also far more likely to own patents. These findings, Wallsten writes, suggest that "government is 'picking winners' by funding projects submitted by firms that have a history of doing R & D and have already achieved some degree of market success."

Wallsten also found that, on average, firms that received grants reduced their own spending on research and development. He believes these grants resulted in "nearly a dollar-for-dollar crowding out effect" on private research spending.

Also, no evidence was found that the grants created jobs nor led to new patents, and Wallsten concludes that the program has done little to encourage innovation. "Instead of taking risks," he writes, it "seems to be designed to fund projects with a high probability of commercial success and thus produce many 'success stories,' which proponents can then point to."

### Don't Fear the Advertiser

*John E. Calfee,* Fear of Persuasion: A New Perspective on Advertising and Regulation. *AGORA, distributed by AEI Press, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Most people think that advertisers manipulate people into buying things they don't want and that government should protect consumers from the harms caused by media manipulators. Wrong, says John Calfee, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. In fact, advertisers do a poor job of manipulation, while government efforts to regulate advertising usually do more harm than good.

Polls taken over several decades consistently report two consumer responses to ads: Most people say they don't believe ads, and most people say they carefully read ads before making purchases. The latter fact makes advertising "an immensely powerful instrument for the elimination of ignorance," as Nobel Prize-winning economist George Stigler once put it.

But regulators regularly *prevent* advertisers from providing consumers with information. In the 1960s, for example, the Food and Drug Administration banned advertisers from informing the public about the cholesterol and fat content of their products. In the 1950s, cigarette advertisers competed to offer smokes with steadily lower amounts of tar and nicotine, while boasting that competitors' brands were more likely to kill. These "fear ads" helped cause steadily falling cigarette sales until the Federal Trade Commission banned them in 1954. The result: cigarette sales once again rose.

More recently, consumer groups have lobbied for bans on tobacco and alcohol advertising. But Calfee argues there is no evidence that banning tobacco and alcohol advertising leads to a reduction in smoking and drinking. Canada, for example, banned most tobacco advertising in 1990 and sharply increased tobacco taxes. The result: the percentage of Canadians who smoke *rose* between 1990-94. In China, a ban on tobacco ads *harmed* the public health, because it ensured that Chinese consumers stayed with Chinese brands, high in tar and nicotine, rather than switch to lower-tar Western cigarettes.

Instead of punitive bans or restrictions, Calfee concludes, the best way government can help consumers is to ensure free and vigorous advertising of all legal products. "Competitive advertising is stacked in favor of the consumer interest," he writes, "and the regulatory system is stacked against it."

## SOCIETY

### Zoning Rights and Wrongs

*Samuel Staley and Lynn Scarlett,* Market-oriented Planning: Principles and Tools. *Reason Public Policy Institute, 3415 South Sepulveda Boulevard #400, Los Angeles, California 90034.*

If you own or run a business, one of your more unpleasant chores may be dealing with a local zoning board. Samuel Staley of the Buckeye Institute and Lynn Scarlett of the Reason Public Policy Institute argue that local zoning boards could become more productive



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by adopting a process they call "market-oriented planning."

Zoning boards often implement decades-old plans that failed to foresee such things as the rise of telecommuting, and thus impose severe restrictions on entrepreneurs who want to work from home. Planners also did not anticipate delivery systems that eliminate the need for big warehouses, leaving many cities with numerous vacant buildings.

Market-oriented planning involves several principles, including:

• *Devolution of power.* Communities ought to be able to make their own decisions on how their land should be used. State-wide land-use plans, as adopted in Oregon and elsewhere, should be discouraged.

• *Flexibility in decision-making.* City areas should be useable for many purposes. An area zoned for a strip mall, for example, can often also be suitable for multi-family housing. Since cities are constantly evolving as the needs and desires of residents change, master plans should be suggestions rather than rigid rules.

• *Limiting standing.* Environmentalists who object to a proposed development often generate formidable amounts of red tape even when they do not live near the property in question. Staley and Scarlett suggest that only people affected by a development be allowed to voice their concerns, not pressure groups in state capitals or in Washington.

• *Make developers pay for improvements—within limits.* Developers should pay the cost of new roads or other infrastructure, but should have some say in how their money is spent. For example, developers often have to pay for larger-than-necessary storm drains, or for interstate-quality roads leading into small housing complexes. Such burdens are wasteful and unnecessary.

Centralized planning by bureaucratic mandates, Staley and Scarlett conclude, "is both costly and incompatible with dynamic economies. Market-oriented planning offers both greater predictability and greater flexibility so that communities can evolve as economies and consumer preferences change over time."

## Doctors Don't Discriminate Against Women

*Sally L. Satel, "There Is No Women's Health Crisis," in* The Public Interest *(Winter 1998), 1112 16th Street N.W. #530, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

A recurring complaint among feminists is that medical research discriminates against women. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, for example, has denounced "the appalling degree to which women were routinely excluded from clinical trials." Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala adds, "Women have good reason to be cynical about whether this country cares" about their health.

Sally Satel, lecturer at the Yale School of Medicine, disagrees. Some important medical studies that began in the 1950s and '60s did exclude women. But since 1978, most important clinical trials have included women. Johns Hopkins researchers Adele Gilpin and Curtis Meinert examined 15,000 studies that began in 1993 and found that 60-70 percent included women. Harvard School of Public Health researcher Chloe Bird looked at all clinical trials published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* between 1990-92. She found that 83 percent included women—and the remainder either involved male-only diseases or took place in such male-dominated institutions as prisons and veterans hospitals. About 30 percent of the participants in NIH-funded AIDS research trials are women—double the percentage of AIDS-sufferers who are female.

If anything, medical researchers favor women. The largest study under way at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the 14-year, $625 million Women's Health Initiative, which does not include men. The National Cancer Institute spends more battling breast cancer than any other form of cancer, even though more women die from malignancies of the lung than from those of the breast.

Satel believes there are many unsolved medical issues that are primarily of interest to women, such as the validity of hormone replacement therapy and whether drug dosages should change after menopause. "But it is wrongheaded," she emphasizes, "to confuse the need to know more—an imperative that will always be with us—with the notion that women are second-class subjects of medical research."

## Is Ignorance an Excuse?

*Dan M. Kahan, "Ignorance of the Law Is No Excuse—But Only for the Virtuous," in* Michigan Law Review *(October 1997), 625 South State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109.*

It's a long-standing legal maxim that "ignorance of the law is no excuse." But this notion, often referred to as the "mistake-of-law doctrine," was adopted in far simpler times. Dan Kahan, who teaches at the University of Chicago Law School, suggests that ordinary citizens who try to keep up with increasingly arcane laws do so at their peril.

Julio Marrero, for instance, was arrested in a Manhattan disco at 1 A.M.



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for illegally carrying a weapon. He explained to the courts that the New York gun ban specifically exempted "corrections officers of any state correctional facility or of any penal correctional institution." Since Marrero worked in a federal prison in Danbury, Connecticut, he believed that the reference to "any penal correctional institution" applied to him—a belief reinforced by his instructor during a criminal justice course he took while off-duty. But though lower courts agreed with Marrero, the New York State Court of Appeals disagreed and sent Marrero to jail on the claim that he should have studied the law more closely.

The Marrero case, Kahan believes, shows that even well-prepared citizens suffer under the mistake-of-law doctrine, though sometimes courts are lenient with a first-time offender. Over the years, courts have excused small campaign contributors who didn't report their contributions, CB radio-users who didn't get a government license, or importers of amphibious vehicles, pressure-breathing suits, and aerial cameras who didn't obtain government approval before bringing these products into the U.S. In such cases, "courts have recognized mistake of law as a defense because the underlying conduct violates no moral norms independent of the law that prohibits it." Courts have been harsher in confronting behavior that seems immoral or illegal, even if it has not been outlawed, such as sawing off shotgun barrels.

"Refusing to excuse even reasonable mistakes" *discourages* citizens from researching what laws define as right and wrong, Kahan writes, "by making it hazardous for a citizen to rely on her private understanding of the law."

## SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

### Tiger, Tiger

*Michael t'Sas-Rolfes, "Who Will Save the Wild Tiger?" PERC, 502 South 19th Avenue #211, Bozeman, Montana 59715.*

International efforts to save tigers have become increasingly more stringent as the world's tiger supply steadily declines. In 1900, conservationists estimate, the world had about 100,000 tigers. Today, only about 4,800 to 7,300 tigers remain in the wild, with about the same number living in zoos or circuses.

Michael t'Sas-Rolfes, a conservation economist, says environmentalists have done a poor job in protecting the tiger because they have relied on strict government controls. Free markets and private property, he argues, could do a better job in tiger conservation than governments.

The international ban on tiger products has made tigers an increasingly valuable commodity. In some countries, the prices poachers pay for one tiger skeleton "may be as much as ten times the average annual per capita gross national product," and tiger bones, valued in Asia for their purported medicinal properties, are easily smuggled.

Most people who live in tiger habitats are poor and would happily see tigers killed, since they often eat cattle and occasionally humans. Yet tigers could be protected by "ecotourism" and limited tiger hunts. Indeed, "regulated trophy hunting of charismatic wild species" already generates a good deal of money for conservation measures in Africa.

t'Sas-Rolfes suggests that commercial tiger-breeding facilities, which currently exist in China and Thailand, could lessen the demand for black-market tiger bones. In a similar case, Chinese breeders have helped protect black bears by selling bear bones from farms at lower costs than poachers charge in the black market.

Environmentalists could also protect tiger habitat by buying land for the animals' use. "Adopt-a-tiger" programs, where donors could designate the reserve where their funds should go, could provide a potent source of revenue for international conservation groups.

"If environmentalists are to succeed in saving the wild tiger from extinction," t'Sas-Rolfes concludes, they "must convert live tigers from liabilities to assets" by replacing command-and-control regulation with market-based measures.

We welcome submissions of reports, articles, or papers you think should be summarized in THE DIGEST. Please send to P.O. Box 8093, Silver Spring, Maryland 20907.

## OTHER COUNTRIES

### Prague's Market Spring

*Thomas W. Hazlett, "Velvet Devolution," in* Reason *(March 1998), 3415 South Sepulveda Boulevard #400, Los Angeles, California 90034.*

This past November, Vaclav Klaus resigned as prime minister of the Czech Republic after his coalition government collapsed in a corruption scandal. As finance minister from 1989-92 and prime minister from 1992-97, Klaus played a crucial role in transforming his nation's economy from communism to capitalism.

But after his resignation, some critics argued that Klaus's tenure had been a failure. *Business Week*, for example, described the Czech Republic under Klaus as "another place where free markets went haywire." Thomas Hazlett, an economist at the University of California, Davis, thinks that assessment too harsh. "The sky, while a bit darker these days, has not fallen on the Czech Republic," he writes.

When Klaus became finance minister in December 1989, only 3 percent of the Czechoslovak economy was in private hands. By December 1995, after the second wave of privatizations (and the Slovak secession), 75 percent of the Czech economy was in the private sector. The *Wall Street Journal* reports that the Czech economy ranks 12th on a global index of economic freedom, higher than Germany (which ranks 21st), Hungary (64th) and Poland (85th).

But Klaus could have done a better job, Hazlett argues. According to the National Property Fund, while Czech corporations worth $10 billion were successfully privatized, businesses worth $6 billion remain in government control. The state still controls railways, coal mines, oil and steel companies, and the Czech national airline. More significantly, several major banks remain under Czech government control. These banks lent recklessly to dubious enterprises—including many failing state-owned firms—knowing the government would not allow the bankers to foreclose on the loans.

Continuing state ownership of banking, Hazlett argues, is a major reason why the Prague Stock Exchange index has



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fallen from roughly 1000 to 500 in just four years. But there are other reasons why capitalism has not thrived. Without an independent judiciary, the Czech government has found it hard to enforce property rights, including stock ownership. And no bankruptcy law exists, resulting in "very confused and lengthy litigation" whenever a Czech firm declares bankruptcy.

Hazlett believes Klaus's Civic Democratic Party will likely lose the next Czech national elections, to be held some time during 1998. But there's little chance a future government will reverse Klaus's work, since many members of the Social Democrats have argued that Klaus did not go far enough in privatization. Moreover, "the Communists have no party and no chance—a situation nearly unique in the region."

"No serious electoral entity," Hazlett concludes, "will attack Klaus's transforming achievements."

### In the Steppes of Central Asia

*Zanny Minton Beddoes, "Central Asia: A Caspian Gamble," in* The Economist *(February 7, 1998), 25 St. James's Street, London SW1A 1HG, England.*

One of the enduring themes of nineteenth-century diplomacy was the "Great Game" between Britain and Russia over control of Central Asia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, diplomats around the world once again wonder and worry over who will rule Tashkent or Samarkand. The main interest, notes *Economist* staff writer Zanny Beddoes, is who will control the vast untapped Central Asian oil and gas reserves.

The Caspian basin currently has approximately 70 billion barrels of oil, according to Woods McKenzie, a petroleum consulting firm. This is about six percent of the world's known energy reserves, and tapping it will make many countries richer. Azerbaijan, for example, could see its oil revenues rise to $6 billion annually by 2010, increasing its gross national product tenfold.

But many tricky diplomatic questions need to be settled before oil and gas companies can expand their Central Asian operations. Pipelines currently are scarce. Should pipelines be built across the entire continent? Should the oil and gas under the Caspian Sea be equally divided among the five nations whose land includes stretches of the sea coast, or should each nation extend its boundaries into the sea?

Corporations will also have to deal with the strongmen who rule the five nations of Central Asia. These former Communist apparatchiks, Beddoes reports, are often egomaniacs: Turkmenistan's president, for example, leads a government that combines "an extreme personality cult with a police state." Bribery is also commonplace: paying off a tax collector in Azerbaijan costs $50,000, while customs inspectors in Uzbekistan routinely demand 10 percent of the value of anything imported into that nation.

Beddoes also suggests that Central Asia's leaders consider what to do with their newfound wealth. They could, as the Norwegians have done, carefully invest the money to ensure that their countries will benefit when the oil and gas run out. Or Central Asian strongmen could follow the sorry fate of Nigeria, and fritter away their windfall foolishly. "Authoritarianism, corruption, and cronyism are rife" in Central Asia, warns Beddoes. And "unchallenged, these weaknesses will prevent the region from fulfilling its promise."

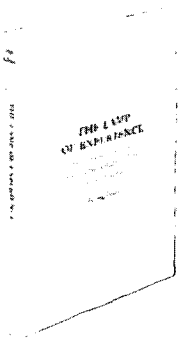

## A Classic Work on America's Founding

### The Lamp of Experience

**Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution**

By Trevor Colbourn

". . . a joy to read."
—Lucius F. Ellsworth



In a landmark work, a leading scholar of the eighteenth century examines the ways in which an understanding of the nature of history influenced the thinking of the founding fathers. As Jack P. Greene has observed, "[The Whig] conception saw the past as a continual struggle between liberty and virtue on one hand and arbitrary power and corruption on the other." Many founders found in this intellectual tradition what Josiah Quincy, Jr., called the "true old English liberty," and it was this Whig tradition—this conception of liberty—that the champions of American independence and the crafters of the new republic sought to perpetuate. Colbourn supports his thesis—that "[I]ndependence was in large measure the product of the historical concepts of the men who made it"—by documenting what books were read most widely by the founding generation. He also cites diaries, personal correspondence, newspapers, and legislative records.

Trevor Colbourn is President Emeritus of the University of Central Florida.

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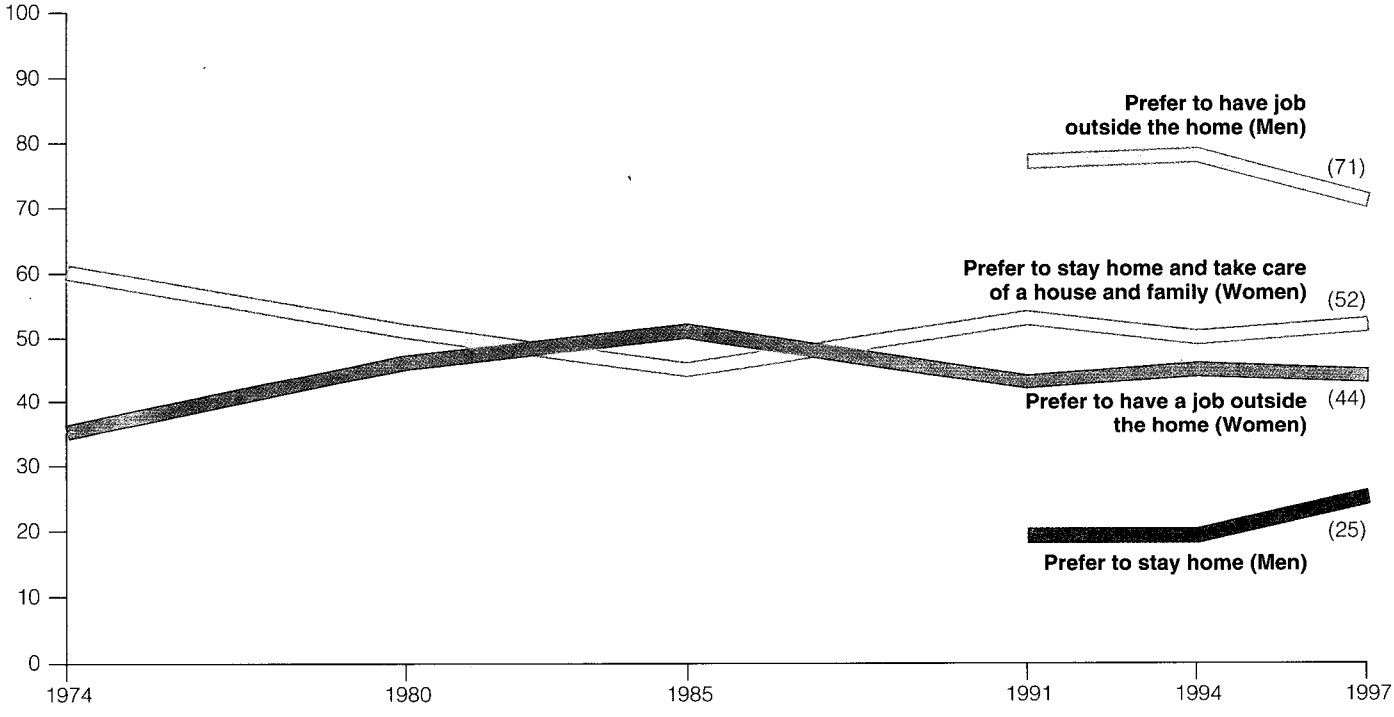
# Opinion Pulse

EDITED BY KARLYN BOWMAN

# WHAT WOMEN WANT

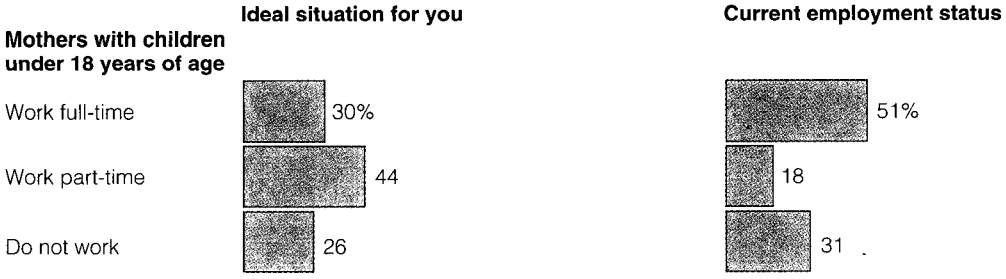
Since 1974, Roper Starch Worldwide has been asking women whether they would prefer to have a job outside the home or to stay home—if they were free to do either. When all women are asked the question, 52 percent say they would prefer to stay home and 44 percent would prefer to have a job outside the home. Twenty-five percent of men say they would prefer to stay home. A strong plurality (44 percent) of women with children under 18 say their ideal situation would be to work part-time. Just 18 percent say that is the case for them today, while 51 percent say they are working full-time, and 31 percent are not working outside the home.

Question: **If you were free to do either, would you...?**




**Source:** Surveys by Roper Starch Worldwide, latest that of September 6–13, 1997.

Question: **Considering everything...?**




**Source:** Survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, March 14–26, 1997.



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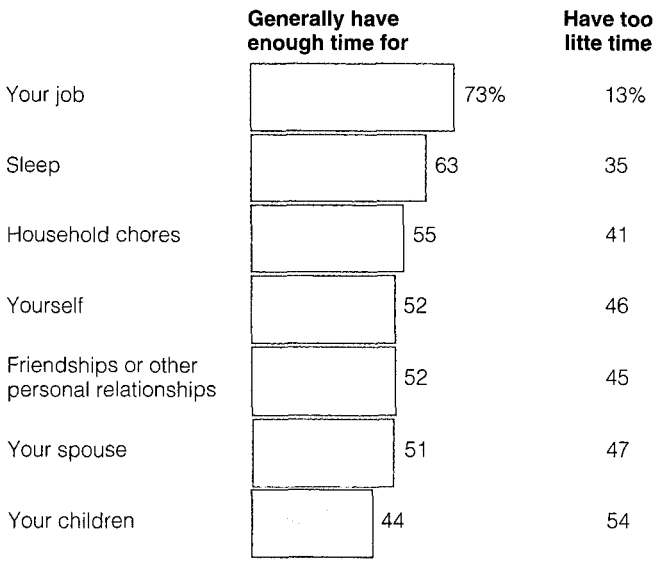
# CHILD CARES

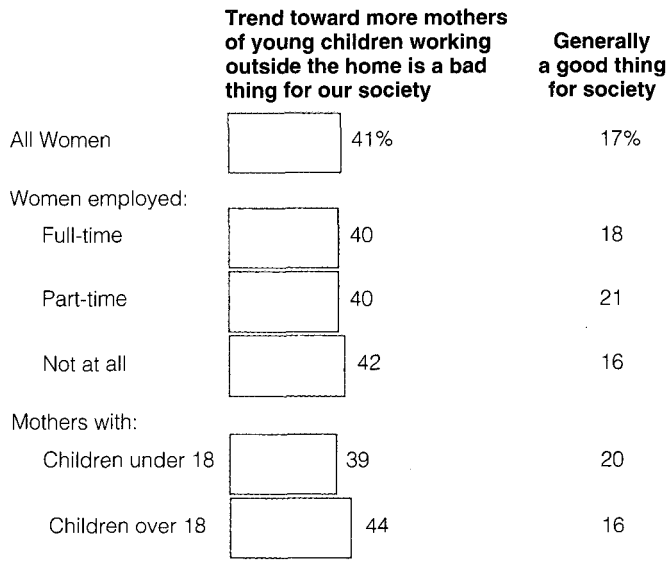
When parents are asked whether they have enough time for various things, a majority say they have too little time for their children. Strong pluralities of women say they think the trend toward more mothers of young children working outside the home is a bad thing for society, and only about two in ten say it's a good thing. Two thirds of men and women say that more than one person in their household has to work to maintain the standard of living they desire. A majority of women, but only 38 percent of men, say that more than one person has to work to cover their household's basic necessitities.

Question: **For each of the following activities, please tell me if you...?**



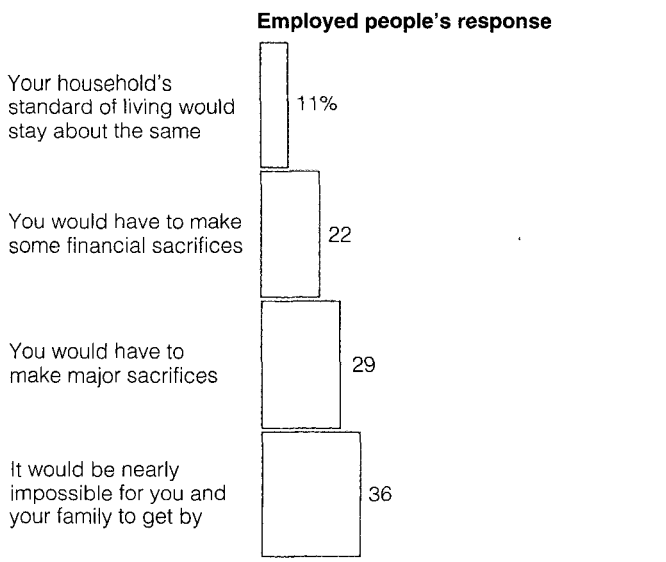

**Note:** Employed people were asked about their job, married people about their spouse, and parents with children under 18 years of age were asked about their children.
**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, March 17–19, 1995.

Question: **Next please tell me if you think each of the following trends is...?**



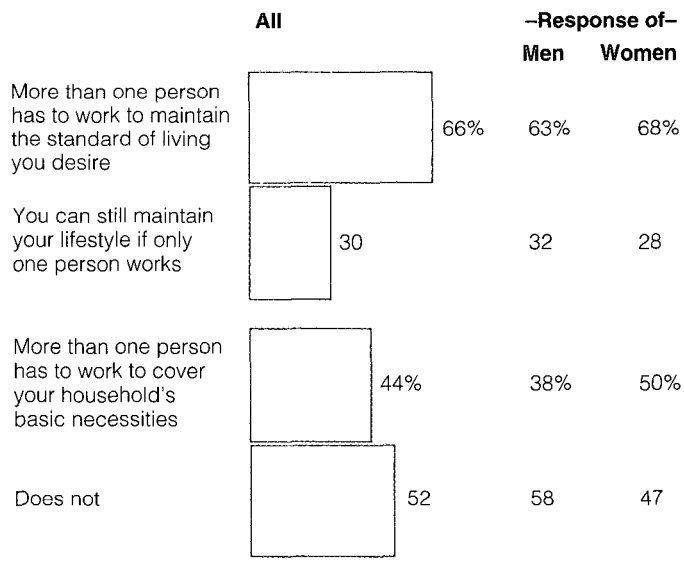

**Source:** Survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, March 14–26, 1997.

Question: **Suppose you were to leave your job in order to stay at home to take care of your home and family...?**




**Source:** Survey by Roper Starch Worldwide, September 6–13, 1997.

Question: **Does more than one person in your household...?**
Question: **How about to cover your household's...?**




**Note:** Sample is adults 30 years and over.
**Source:** Survey by the Institute for Social Inquiry (University of Connecticut) for *Reader's Digest*, July 18–30, 1996.



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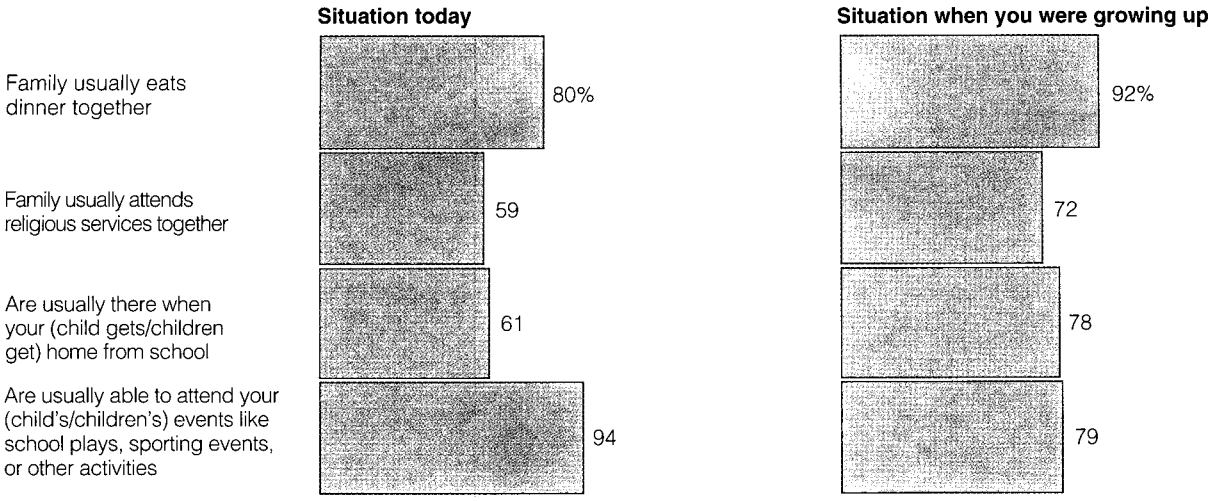
# FAMILY RITUALS AND RULES

Ninety-two percent of mothers say their families usually ate dinner together when they were growing up; today, 80 percent say that's the case. Sixty-one percent of mothers today say they are usually there when the kids come home from school, down from the 78 percent who reported that was the case when they were growing up. There has been a drop in the proportion saying their families usually attend church together, but nearly eight in ten parents of young children say they plan to give them religious training. Large majorities agree with Miss Manners about how children should behave toward adults.

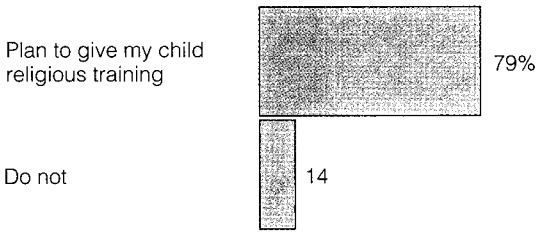
Question: **Now I'd like to ask some questions about the lives of you and your family. First...?**




**Note:** Sample for the first two items is mothers with children under 18 years of age. The sample for the last two items is mothers with at least one school-age child.
**Source:** Survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, March 14–26, 1997.

Question: **When your child gets older, do you...?**

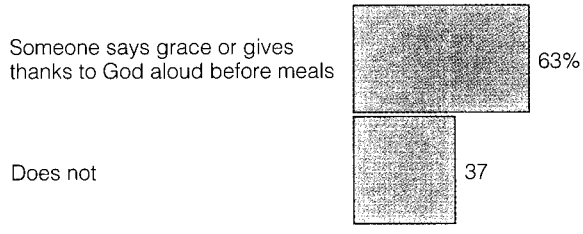
**Parents with children under 3 years of age**




**Source:** Survey by Princeton Survey Research Associates for *Newsweek*, February 25–March 2, 1997.

Question: **At your family meals at home...**

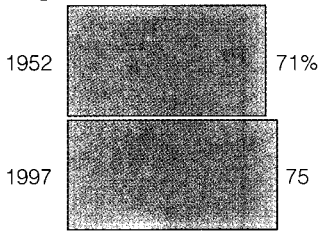
**Parents with children under 18 years of age**



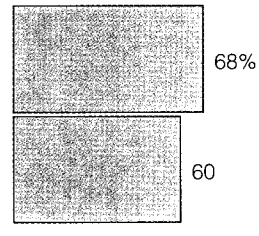

**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, February 24–26, 1997.

Question: **Do you think...?**

**Children of grade school age should be taught to address adult men as "Sir"**




**Children of grade school age should be taught to stand up when guests who are older come into a room**




**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, latest that of February 24–26, 1997.



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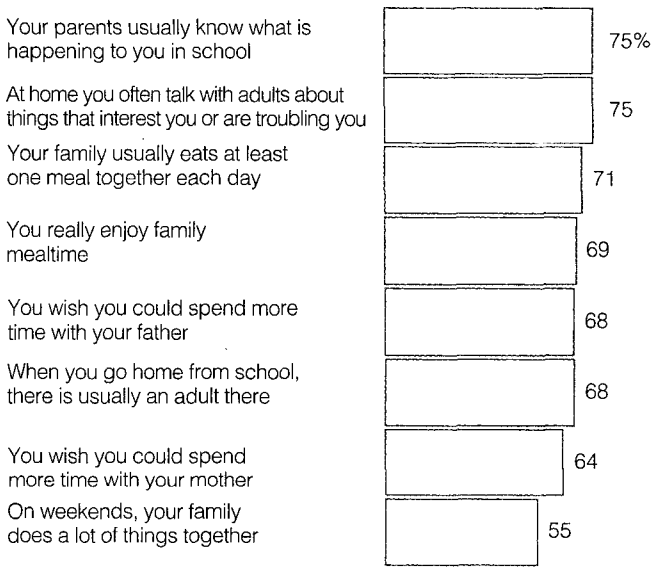
# REBELLIOUS TEENS?

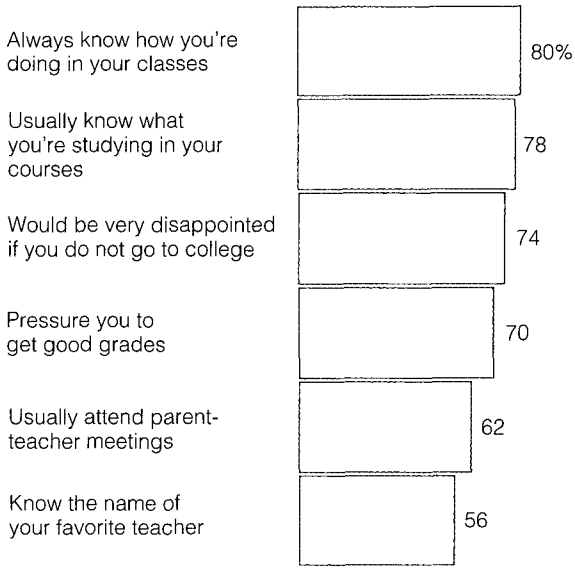
Most teens say their parents know what's going on in their school, and they say they feel comfortable talking with adults about things that interest or trouble them. A majority of teens even say their parent or guardian knows the name of their favorite teacher. Large majorities of teens rate their parents' understanding of big things in their lives as excellent or good. In addition, they say that parental consent should be required for many things including getting a gun, getting married, and having an abortion. Dyeing one's hair and piercing body parts are a different story.

Question: **Which of these describes your family and your life at home?**



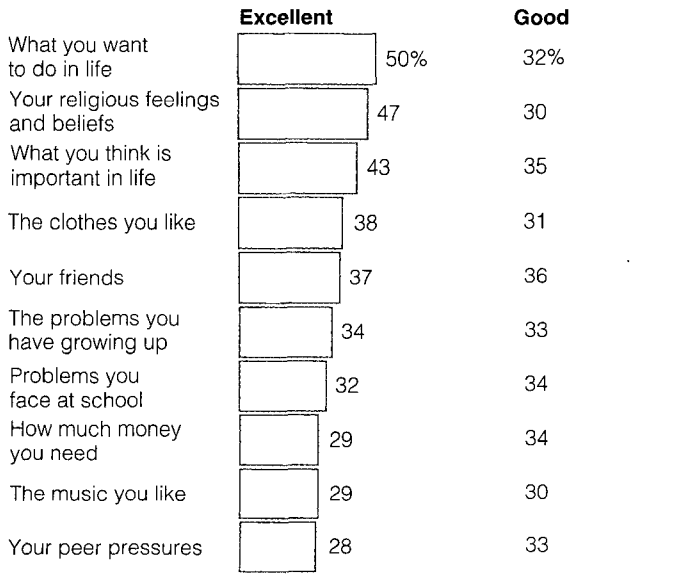

**Note:** Sample is teens 13–17 years old.
**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, November 1996–June 1997.

Question: **Now I'm going to ask you some questions about your parents or guardians. Do your parents or guardians...?**



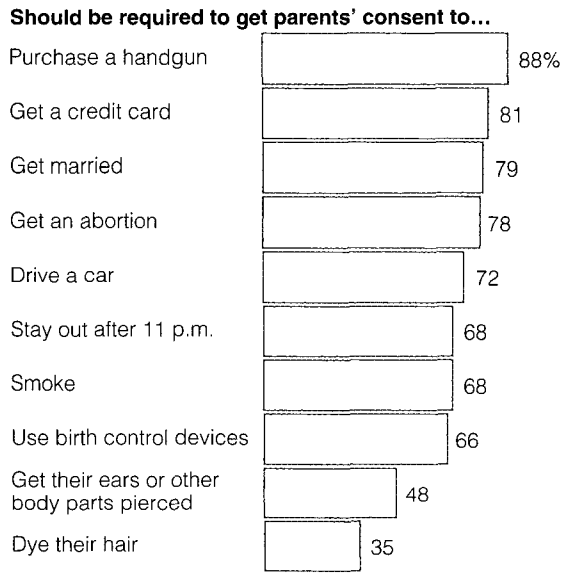

**Note:** Sample is high school students nationwide, grades 9–12.
**Source:** Survey by Public Agenda, October 29–November 20, 1996.

Question: **How would you rate your parents on understanding these things about you?**




**Note:** Sample is teens 13–17 years old.
**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, November 1996–June 1997.

Question: **Do you think that young people under the age of 18...?**




**Note:** Sample is teens 13–17 years old.
**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, November 1996–June 1997.



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# the Mail

We enjoyed the special issue of *The American Enterprise* dedicated to Nashville (March/April), especially the articles on country music. We think Tennesseans may not realize just how far the country music bug has traveled: it's even made it to Yale Law School.

Yale's growing movement of country music lovers coalesces at a country-western bar and grill in nearby Southington. During our time at Yale, we have grown accustomed to spending at least one night a week listening to live country bands, tossing down ribs and a few beverages, and spending time with fellow students and locals.

It's not hard to see why so many people in Connecticut and elsewhere are attracted to the music. The true heirs to American popular music are in Nashville, writing some of the most haunting tributes to family and friendship, home and country, and love in all of its crazy manifestations since Berlin, Gershwin, and Porter.

We will soon graduate and leave here, but we can take comfort in the fact that the popularity of country music is growing and that we will never be too far from a special place in Southington.

We recently received very good news from one of our classmates who will also be leaving Yale. He plans to work in Nashville and has given us an open invitation to visit any time. Plans are already being made to visit frequently.

*Mark Gerson and Sam McGee*
*Yale Law School*

I enjoyed the January/February issue on Generation X, especially the differing views presented. But Peter Sacks' "Gen X Is Not OK" unnerved me. This was a typical slur on Gen Xers. As an educator, Sacks doesn't display the respect he seeks from the students he instructs. Teachers must learn to communicate with their students in order to engage and teach them. Most Gen Xers are not "young men slumped in their chairs" with "looks of utter disengagement."

Should baby boomers ever decide to quit pointing fingers, apologizing, feeling guilty, and finally embrace the generation they have brought into this world, they may find that Gen Xers are willing to forgive, forget, move on, and lead productive, responsible lives.

*Randy Wilson*
*Durango, Colorado*

I was relieved to read the Gen X issue and come away feeling optimistic for a change about this country's future. As a public school teacher in Los Angeles, I witness firsthand the travails of young Gen Xers. I try to understand their pressures (far different from mine at that age) but often become disillusioned because of the many problems they face and will continue to face. This issue of *The American Enterprise* painted a clearer picture for me. Karl Zinsmeister (BIRD'S EYE) says it best: Gen Xers are "setting standards and appear to be the most creative and talented kids ever to enter the U.S. labor force."

This generation needs to be given a healthy dose of optimism if the nation is to have a prosperous and productive future. As a baby boomer, I feel I have the authority to chastise my own generation for its many flaws. With the limited time we have remaining, it is important to admonish and encourage our successors. It's the least we can do, considering how much we've already erred as role models.

*Aubie Brennan*
*Santa Monica, California*

The January/February issue on Generation X makes me feel so much better about my preparation for the future. Disdainful elders never seem to tire of looking down their noses at us, and frowning in disapproval.

They can despise us for the next 20 years, but by that time we'll all be on the same *Titanic* when Social Security finally goes under because of the societal leech that is the baby boom generation.

In marked contrast to the truly lazy generation, plenty of us Gen Xers are preparing well in advance for the financial upheavals of the future. We still have years of productivity left and will prove it by demonstrating prowess and flexibility in the work force. But then again, what do I know? I'm just a cynical, uneducated slacker.

*Rob Best*
*Clermont, Florida*

Why poke fun at those who believe in uncooked food (SCAN, March/April)? If you're going to attack the "frontiers of political correctness," you need a compass to identify meaningful targets. There's no call to condemn people simply because they have tastes and interests different from ours—which is what you did with the raw food advocates.

The problem with political correctness isn't that someone has different ideas, for that would make Galileo, Einstein, and Edison P.C. It's when others are forced to support someone else's ideas. If someone gets on a soapbox and urges employers to hire women, blacks, or gays, let him preach away. Maybe he'll influence our behavior, which is as it should be in a healthy marketplace of ideas. The evil comes when he turns to

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politics and uses the government to force employers to hire women, blacks, or gays. That propels normally tolerant people to fight back to preserve their freedom of expression and action.

So far as I can tell, the uncooked food devotées have sought neither government subsidy nor governmental imposition of their ideas on others. And in this politics-besotted age, that puts them pretty close to the angels.

*James L. Payne*
*Sandpoint, Idaho*

Thanks for the recent issue on Nashville. I read the welfare article by Martin Wooster ("The Down & Out Are Headed Up"). It was just right. Stressing the stick while putting the carrot just beyond their reach seems to work great. Of course, some people have known that all along.

*Dan McMurry*
*Middle Tennessee State University*

I must admit that the Nashville issue didn't draw my attention initially. That should come as no surprise, since I am from New York City.

New Yorkers do think the world revolves around them. How very interesting it was to enter a different world, thanks to this issue. Those of us who come from the true urban lifestyle usually can't help but picture the Midwest and the South as one huge farmland and a variety of small towns. We've been raised to be oblivious.

I especially appreciated Richard Miniter's piece, "Why Do Boom Towns Boom?" As an entrepreneur, I know of the struggles one faces when dealing with the market and the changing moods of our economy.

It was extremely encouraging to read about how business survives in smaller American cities. One would never have known that Nashville is a metropolis in its own right. Such towns are self-made, and it is clear to me now that its residents have a great deal to be proud of.

I commend the magazine for a terrific job. The entire issue was well-rounded and a delight to read. I'm hoping native Tennesseans and other southerners enjoyed it as much as this New Yorker did.

*Leo Zalfini*
*Queens, New York*

Your recent Gen X issue was very informative. It helped distinguish Generation X in ways unseen before. Still, I'd like to call attention to an issue that concerns me. As a married member of this generation, I'm paying more taxes now than when I was single. This must be what they call the "marriage penalty tax."

Had my wife and I decided to live together first, the federal government would have rewarded us with a nice tax return. But because we are a couple of Generation Xers from the old school, we decided to go against the grain and do the right thing, despite the tax incentives to do otherwise. As newlyweds, we advise the soon-to-be-married: Before you start saving for that down payment on a house, start saving for your first tax bill.

*Richard Obcena*
*Cadott, Wisconsin*

Kevin Hassett's article about the federal debt misses the point (SCAN, January/February). The notion that government should "invest" in "high-return projects" is just as scary when posited by conservatives as liberals.

We must realize that a debt is not a debt when the borrower has no intention of repaying it. When a government takes money it has no intention of repaying, it's a tax. The government extracts a tax in the form of new "borrowing" each year. Some years the tax is larger than others, and occasionally there's no tax at all.

We are in our present enviable economic position not because of the smart choices our government made but because our government largely leaves us alone to decide how we should best allocate our own resources. Hassett offers a choice between two countries where the government is funneling borrowed money—one into private investment with high returns, the other into subsidies of current consumption. Give me a country where the government gets out of the business of funneling money altogether.

*Bob Consigli*
*Littleton, Colorado*

The DIGEST of March/April included a summary of my recent report on the 1872 Mining Law. I would like to expound on the main idea behind my research. The Mining Law of 1872 isn't as bad as many people think. In particular, environmentalists' claims that mining is unregulated are false. There are a number of federal laws governing the environmental impacts of mining, and both federal and state agencies require reclamation of mining sites. Furthermore, most public land in the West has been placed off limits to mineral exploration and development.

In order to mine at all, mining companies must have access to large areas of land, only a small amount of which is ever actually mined. The value of the 1872 Mining Law is that it allows companies freedom to explore and, once a discovery is made, to obtain secure property rights to the site.

*David Gerard*
*Political Economy Research Center*

Thank you for the outstanding and informative article on Tennessee's Families First program in the March/April issue ("The Down & Out Are Headed Up"). We were extremely pleased with the opportunity provided to us to discuss our welfare reform efforts. I appreciate the time Martin Wooster spent researching and writing such an accurate and thorough article.

In addition, I would like to express my appreciation to the editorial staff for the decision to devote a good portion of the recent issue to Nashville and our beautiful state of Tennessee.

*Commissioner Linda B. Rudolph*
*Tennessee Department of Human Services*

CORRECTION: In THE ECONOMIST in our March/April issue, Kevin Hassett described a work by Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott as a "book." It was in fact a draft manuscript of a book that will be published, with revisions by the authors, in 1999.



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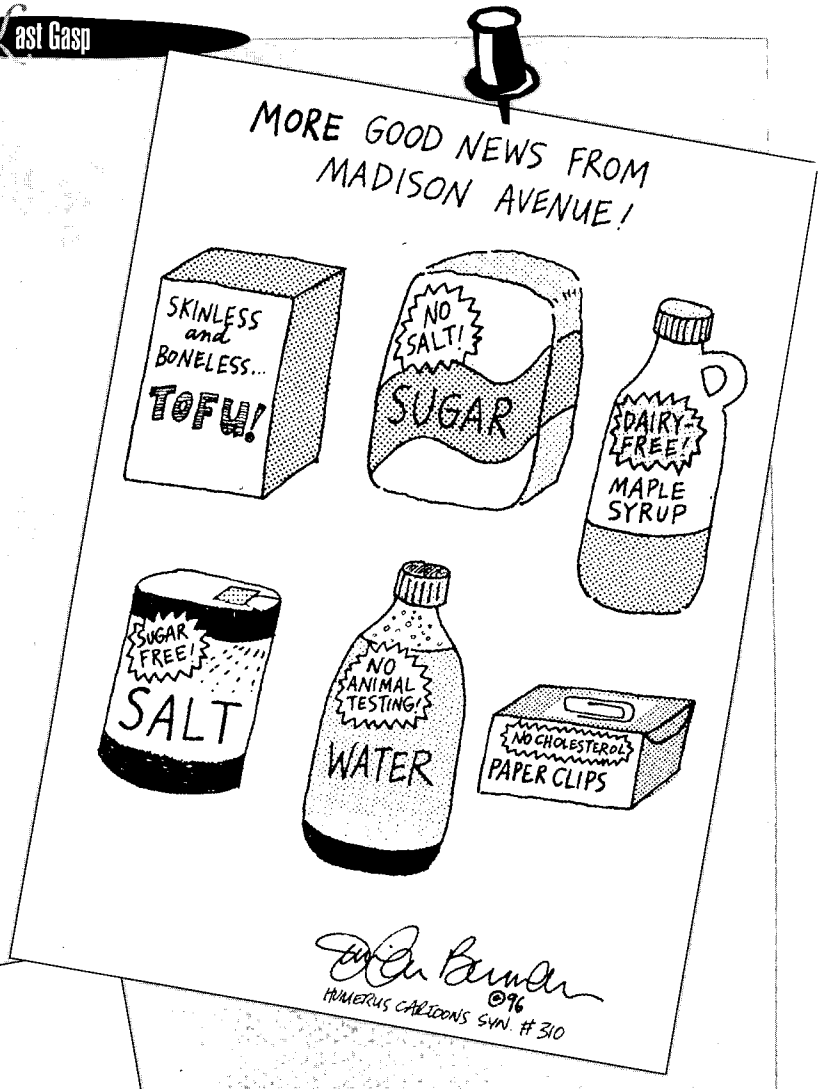

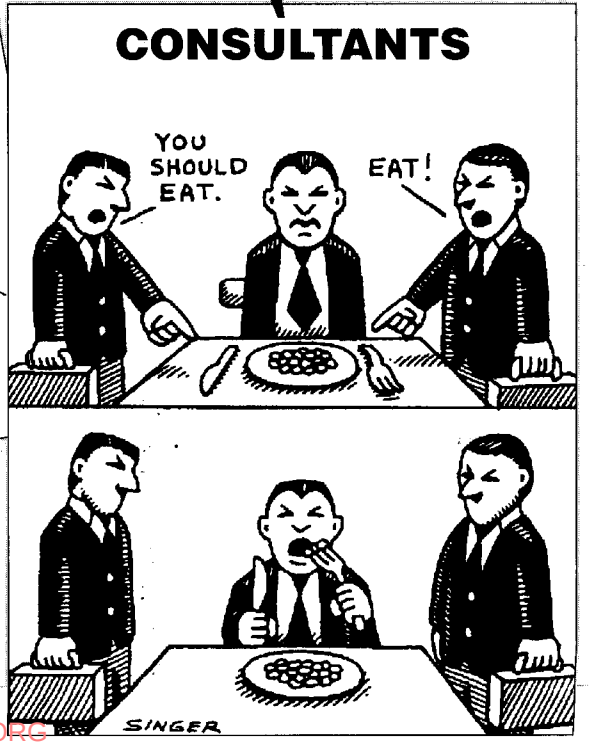




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**Theodore Waitt**

*Gateway 2000, North Sioux City, SD. 34. Married, 4 children.*

Talked out of joining family cattle business. By father. Left college senior year to start computer mail order business in farmhouse. With $10,000 start-up loan secured by grandmother's CD.

"Everybody was heading to Silicon Valley. So I picked a cornfield."

Cofounded Gateway 2000 with partner, Mike Hammond. 1985. Direct-market PC seller and manufacturer based in South Dakota. First year revenues $100,000. Explosive growth due to low costs, fast service. Expanded overseas, 1993. Marketing coup: chose Holstein as company mascot.

"It was either the family cow or the family dog. 'Bunky' lost."

*1996 revenues: $5 billion.*

**Started reading Forbes as a student at the University of Iowa in 1984.**

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